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# '42 REBELLION



# '42 Rebellion

*(An authentic review of the Great Upheaval of 1942)*

*By*

**GOVIND SAHAI**

*Parliamentary Secretary*

**to**

**THE GOVERNMENT OF UNITED PROVINCES**

**DELHI**

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## FOREWORD

The revolution of 1942 occupies the same place in the history of this country, as the French and Russian revolutions in the history of their respective countries. The amplitude of the Revolution of '42 has no parallel in History. In no other revolution had such vast multitudes taken part. But amplitude was not the only distinguishing feature of that Revolution. The year '42 brought about a complete transformation in the country: it gave birth to the new India, and gave a new direction to its political life. The struggle for freedom had at first adopted violent methods, and later on switched over to non-cooperation. The struggle of '42 took the form of a People's Revolution. At a time when there was dearth of suitable leaders for making use of the otherwise effective weapon of non-cooperation, and the soldiers of freedom were losing heart, the year '42 suddenly showed them the new path. Hitherto we had merely filled the jails. It was now observed that the leaderless, and unarmed masses were able to destroy the centres of alien administration with lightening speed, and establish their suzerainty over them. The citadel of British rule, which had thus far appeared so strong and impregnable suddenly began to crumble down: here it was a wall that collapsed and there the battlements. The masses realized, after all, that the castle had but walls of sand, and learnt the new technique of pulling down those walls. If another Revolution were to be enacted in India at some future date, the masses are bound to follow this way, whatever other path the handful of select worthies may choose. For me, atleast, the year '42 has just this significance.

"I believe that every writer has his own point of view, and objective", writes the author in his introduction. He himself has his own angle of vision, and views the eruption from a particular point. I am not always in agreement with his point of view, but am glad to say that he has observed mental detachment in accomplishing his difficult task; and this is more difficult than writing the history of a revolution.

The '42 Revolution had permeated every nook and corner of this vast country. It is impossible for any individual to write the history of such a big event. The reports prepared by the Provincial Congress Committees merely bewail the evil deeds of the British, and contain but little of the real history of the Revolution. That history, in its final form, can be written only by years of labour, and that also through the efforts of a multitude of authors. At the present moment quite a number of incidents connected with that history cannot even be published. I have got a friend of mine to write for me the history of the Revolution in the districts of Sitara, Midnapore, and Balia, from a special point of view, and for a specific purpose. That attempt has given me an idea of how complex and hydra-headed a historical event like the '42 can be: and also, how difficult it is to narrate the story when we are so close to the event.

Keeping this in view, the present work indicates that Babu Govind Sahai has really been tire-less in his efforts. Those who regard the '42 as our guide to liberty, will read the book with attention and seek its assistance in chalking the future programme.

JAI PRAKASH NARAIN

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# PART I

*QUIT INDIA*

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## INTRODUCTION

*"The gust of wind that ought to blow, blows, events that ought to take place, take place, and we human beings only ascribe reasons to them."*

—Victor Hugo

Who knows that I myself may be ascribing reasons to that mighty, though inevitable, upheaval of 1942, news of which was so completely suppressed from the world outside. The gigantic sweep of the rebellion, the rapid, but consecutive growth of its stages, and the inexorable pressure of the masses, not only filled me with inspiration and reverence, but also urged me to express myself on this mighty expression of the popular will. This colossal upsurge though unorganised, surpassed all previous struggles in intensity, dimensions, nature, expression, aims and tactics. It was this movement in which almost all the adult Indians played their part, and, again it was a movement which brought in its whirlpool even the remotest Indian villages in the interior. The entire fabric of Indian life was charged and sympathetic chords vibrated in every patriotic heart. The whole nation rose like a Leviathan, as if from slumber, and swiftly did all of us feel that the days of foreign rule in India were few and numbered.

This was indeed a grand romance of history. An unarmed nation suddenly became conscious of its birth-right. The famous lines of the late B.G. Tilak rang a message in everybody's ears 'Swaraj is my birth right', and in its wake came a message to the nation from the Saint of Saigaon, a 'naked fakir', 'do or die'. The Leadership of past and present combined and roused the nation. It all happened so suddenly and so unconsciously that many wondered who worked up the magic wand. People, man and woman, young and old, knew that they were playing with fire, that they were striking their heads against a hard, granite rock, that the enemy was not only armed with all the destructive weapons that science had given him, but that he was also ruthless, relentless, without a conscience, without any ethical and moral sense; moreover, he had received a cruel blow from the Jap and was now retreating, he was in troubled waters; he was faced with a very awkward choice between 'exist without

empire or efface itself'. His fury was thus heightened and his rage grew manifold. The people knew this all, but no one shirked from discharging his or her duty towards the motherland; no one with enough sense of dignity and honour tried to save his or her life, while their brethren were engaged in a titanic struggle against the oppressor. The movement, though this time apparently started by the enemy perhaps with the hope of making good the loss in reputation, swept over the land like a boisterous storm, and we all faced it with cheer and smile. Since none of us bent down but faced the storm boldly, I call the movement the grand romance of our history.

What would have happened if Congress leaders were not put behind prison bars on the night of 9th August, no one knows. Probably Gandhiji would have made fresh attempts to settle the Indian issue amicably. He would have had yet another meeting with Lord Linlithgow. Probably the masses would not have been left leaderless, if on Gandhiji's attempts bearing no fruit he had started the movement. All this appears to me to be merely wishful thinking. The fact is that Mahatmaji had asked the nation to prepare itself for the final struggle against the tottering structure of foreign power in India—he had asked us to 'do or die', to risk everything for a cause which we all held so dear to our hearts. There was already a psychic revolt against the ruling power, which had proved its incompetence to save the lives and property of those over whom it ruled. It failed to deliver any goods to the nation despite its pompous platitudes and grotesque claim of trusteeship. In the deep recesses of the hearts of all Indians, there was already a volcano waiting to erupt at any moment. Every Indian had become a live bomb and these bombs only needed to burst. The zero-hour came the moment our leaders were shut away from us; the bugles were blown and the war-cry was raised. The war between the oppressor and the oppressed, between the ruler and the ruled, between the exploiter and the exploited broke out.

We are all proud of this real people's war. We lost hundreds and thousands of the best sons and daughters of our motherland; our women were assaulted and dishonoured, our villages were pillaged and our property destroyed and burnt. Colossal losses, both in men and materials, were sustained by the nation. That was the price that India paid for her liberty; that was the sacrifice that India made in the vindication of her honour. But, our gains have been far more numerous and greater in value than our

losses, because we proved to the hilt that we were as well-fitted to live as a civilised people as any other nation of the world, with a consciousness of our rights and with a preparedness to risk everything for the preservation of our race, culture and civilisation. Though the British Government and its agents tried their best, by false propaganda and distorting facts and figures, to let down the Congress, the Mahatma and the nation, though the public exchequer had to pay enormous sums for the maintenance of the regular campaign of vilification and vituperation, the thinking people all the world over thought of rebel India as much the better off. Gradually, as facts and figures escaped to foreign countries, unmutilated, India went much higher in the esteem of foreigners and all the freedom loving peoples. We, to these peoples, are no more a nation which bears silently the tortures and afflictions of a foreign rule, but we are a nation which fought bravely against every type of Imperialism and Fascism. The World is today acclaiming India as the true stalwart of freedom and liberty, and the people outside India are not tired of singing the *saga* of our heroic and historic struggle. Many of us have now been restored to the Mahatma's cult of truth and non-violence; it is no more a political expedient but a philosophy of a national and corporate life. We have learnt a lot about the inner workings and shameless exploits of a foreign administration and are convinced, beyond any shadow of doubt, that for a healthy and civilised corporate life, it is essential, that foreigners as ruling power, must quit. There is yet another gain, which though invisible to the common eye, is equally weighty and important; that the ruthless, cruel hand of the foreigner deals blows to all of us alike, that the Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Christians and Parsis are equally crushed by the soul-less machine of foreign aggression. This fact was realised by tens of thousands of Muslims, who rubbed shoulders with their compatriots during those great days of national revolution.

As aforesaid, I have not been a mere spectator to this great human drama, but have been an active party to it. I have watched the nation at war since my early childhood, and have been in the rank and file of the freedom's army since 1930. But not at any other time did I feel so much enthused and inspired to 'do or die', as during those great days of 1942. I have worked and fought with millions of my countrymen and women and shared the jail life with many more still. I have seen the accumulated wrath and grievances of a great nation suddenly finding expression

in a soul-moving struggle. Since then I have felt a curious penchant in me to write in a scientific manner everything, that I could possibly lay my hands upon, pertaining to this great movement. I longed to 'present the case of a nation in the making', yet a nation in the iron-claws of a foreign power and now struggling to be free; I longed to collect all the available data and facts and then systematically analyse them; I longed to trace out causes, permanent and immediate of this great movement to make a review of the sincere and honest efforts of millions of valiant fighters for freedom; I longed to pay my tribute to the martyrs who shed their noble and innocent blood for the motherland, to make a record of their services lest they are forgotten, and those who were reduced to abject poverty only because they wanted to live with honour and dignity of a free people; I longed to place before the world genuine facts, figures and events of the movement in defence of our national honour and social prestige.

Every writer has his or her angle of vision and point of view. He or she owes some allegiance to a school of thought or party in action. I have my own party allegiance and am bound by its discipline. The Congress, the great organisation, to which I have the honour to belong as a national vanguard and also as the army of liberation, and its leader Mahatma Gandhi, in every fibre of their being represent India's hopes, ideals and goals. Congress policy, programme, ideals and ideologies are my own. Much has been said against the Congress and the Mahatma. I have tried to refute all these allegations and allowed facts and figures to stand as jury. At the same time, I have not forgotten that as far as possible my approach must be strictly scientific and the partisan in me must be subdued by the cool-headed calculator. I have consequently tried to keep facts and figures unsoiled and untouched by my sentiments, bias and prejudice, though I have no pretensions to complete success in taking this almost inconceivable attitude.

In order to see things for myself, in order to have fuller view of the dilapidated and ravaged India, ruined by the British and their hirelings, I made an extensive tour of the country. I wanted to collect first-hand and reliable data as far as I could. Innumerable difficulties came in my way. There was censure on all the news about the movement, there was very little literature and recorded evidence about this as about the previous movements. Whatever literature we have got is so scanty and scrappy that it would not, by any stretch of imagina-

tion, suffice to produce a complete picture. Still I tried to lay my hands upon whatever I could and use it to the best of my ability. The lack of records I endeavoured to make good by my personal talks and conversations with people and their leaders of those great hectic days of restless activity. I visited almost all the affected areas and talked to almost all the surviving victims of British military and police force. I compiled together all the scattered mass of literature on the movement and have also consulted Government communiques and publications of the Home Department like 'Congress Responsibility for the Disturbances', and 'Some Facts' by an Indian Journalist.' The result of all my pains and troubles, is this present volume, which, with great pleasure, I am presenting to the interested public, and shall feel amply rewarded if my readers feel that I have been able to dispel much of the ignorance about the movement, and have been able to produce a coherent and unvarnished account of this mighty upheaval. I confess it is nothing more than a sketchy description of the various phases, and features of the spontaneous outburst of a suppressed people, the crystallisation of passions in organised and disorganised manner. I owe a deep sense of gratitude to a number of people, the mere mention of whose names would require a book of equal size, to those who inspired and assisted me in my venture and to those leaders and workers of all the 11 provinces of India, who provided me with invaluable material, the lack of which would have made the publication of the book in the present form impossible on account of the absence of complete literature on the movement, and to those thousands of people who suffered, and survived the fury of the movement and related to me its grand *saga*. Lastly, do I acknowledge, with the sense of gratitude full of affection, the assistance given to me by my friends Mr. N.S. Bhandari and Shri Krishna-Chandra of Gita Press in the preparation of this book.

*Jai Hind.*

## CHAPTER I

### OBJECTIVE ANALYSIS

#### *1—SCIENCE OF REVOLUTION.*

Revolutions do not break out all of a sudden. A Revolution is not a bolt from the blue. A political movement is not the result of the touch of a magic-wand. Neither can such a movement be suppressed for ever by ruthless oppression. 'March of an army can be checked, but march of ideas cannot be checked,' said Goethe, and a movement is nothing but the external manifestation of the suppressed feelings of a people. Bitterness against authority is generated by soul-less exploitation and suppression. There is breach of faith and loss of trust. The combustible material of permanent causes is spread far and wide, and the immediate causes only ignite it. The result is a great conflagration, a rebellion, a revolution or a mass movement. The permanent causes of revolutions generally are :—

- (1) Growing economic and political dissatisfaction among the people, e.g. the French, Russian, Chinese revolutions and India's movement of 1942 and a dynamic urge for freedom.
- (2) Growth and development of political aspirations and the birth of a sense of national dignity, e.g. the Mexican Revolution and the Indian Movement of 1942.
- (3) Loss of faith in the existing power, e.g. almost all the Revolutions of the world, including the Bloodless Revolution of Great Britain of 1688 and all the British Reform Movements.
- (4) A strong craving for change—social and political among the people and a desire to oppose the opposite party in future, e.g. the Scheduled Castes Movements in India
- (5) The growing dis-satisfaction among different parties caused by indifference shown by the Government towards them and their uniting together over a common issue, e.g. the Khilafat Movement.

- (6) The policy of soul-less suppression pursued by Government and persistent disregard shown by it towards the legitimate demands of the people, e.g. India's Movement of 1942.

These are some of the main permanent causes of almost all the major revolutions of history. These factors go deep in the hearts and minds of the people and thus prepare a thorough and solid ground for revolution. They create a psychic front against the authority which provides the raw-material for the drama of a mighty revolution. These factors again steadily drive parties in the hostile camps ; steadily do both the parties develop a fault-finding nature and steadily are the ranks and files of both the parties tightened together. Both the parties are in a state of armed preparedness and wait for the warbugle to sound. The war-cry is given by what we call "immediate causes." The following are some of the immediate causes of almost all the revolutions of the world. —

- (1) Exhaustion of restraint and patience, thus far shown by opposing parties.
- (2) The adamant attitude of the authority, coupled with the tightening of the belt by it and the wounding of the innocent pride of a particular party.
- (3) Some great crises like war, famine, and pestilence which cause untold misery and suffering to the people. (The "October Revolution" of Russia and the French Revolution of 1789).

A slight letting down and humiliation, a little exasperation, a petty affray, unimportant skirmish, or a very insignificant injury to the corporate life of the people is enough to let lose the flood-gates of a revolution or war, when the ground-work is ready, when the relations of the opposing parties are considerably strained, when mutual hatred reaches its zenith, and when psychic antagonism is deep-rooted and mature. Sometimes the revolution or the war thus started develops and progresses in accordance with a pre-meditated plan, at other times it assumes an entirely different shape and runs into entirely different channels. Every revolution has its own course and its own ways. Mahatma Gandhi's non-cooperation movements have always been strictly non-violent; but incidents like the Chauri Chaura tragedy are not rare in the history of these movements. The organised movements for a noble cause have been met by organized

violence and ruthless suppression, forcing the movement to progress in an organised manner, and thus the rage, fury, and madness of both the parties are aroused to a high pitch. A reign of terror persists and the life and property, of even those who ostensibly keep aloof are put in jeopardy. Thus, almost all revolutionary periods are periods of insecurity and blood-bath.

Yet, despite all these sufferings and sacrifices, all revolutions do not attain their avowed objectives. The great Mutiny of 1857 failed and also other movements started by Congress. But this is only a shallow and surface-reading of history. Almost all the revolutions leave their deep impress on the minds and memories, of the people. The valiant fighters of 1857 left behind a strong tradition of freedom's battle to their successors, though they themselves fell in the battle-field. The Eastern districts of the United Provinces, the Western and Eastern districts of Bihar, the Western districts of Bengal and Midnapur, the districts of Assam Valley, the Balasore district of Orissa and the West and East Khandesh where the great battles of 1857 were fought again became the centres of the Movement of 1942. Besides, revolutions and movements of this type give experience, wisdom, a sense of solidarity, courage, patriotism, ideals, sense of discipline and strategy to the people, which eventually turned out to be of invaluable use to them when a new movement is started. Thus, a movement, though in the beginning it may be an unsuccessful one, proves to be a step forward in the onward march of the nation.

## *2—THE GENERAL BACK-GROUND.*

The Great Movement of 1942 has its permanent as well as immediate causes. During and after the termination of the first World War, the British Government had given solemn promises to India that she would be made a self-governing Dominion in the immediate future, but what we actually got was the Rawlett Act, the massacre of Jallianwalla Bagh, the suppression of India's movements at various times by the armed might of Great Britain, and the Government of India Act, 1935. This coupled with other reasons, had filled the hearts and minds of the people with strong anti-British feelings. Moreover, Britain, by its various acts in the international field, had shown that it meant to hold the Empire together and was actively siding with the Imperialistic forces of the world. It allowed Japan to overrun Manchuria, it

allowed General Franco to strangle the Republic of Spain and it allowed Mussolini to annex Abyssinia as a preliminary to the materialisation of his dream of a resurrected Roman Empire. The second World War started and India was declared a belligerent country without consulting her leaders. It was declared that the war was being fought for the vindication of democracy and in defence of civilization, but Britain showed her unwillingness to concede democratic rights to India. Britain wanted to continue to treat India as a vassal country and to pay for its wars. But the war had raised Indian hopes and aspirations. The Indians had developed a sense of national dignity and they wanted an honourable place for themselves in the comity of nations. They had lost all faith in the might of the British power and were full of a strong craving for transition from slavery to freedom. The fabulous riches of India had been drained out and what remained was abject poverty, emasculated human souls and emaciated bodies. India at this juncture, more than at any other time, felt that Britain was responsible for the economic, social, cultural and political ruin of India. All this had become intolerable and India was resolved to throw off the foreign yoke and to come to her own and work for a healthy, and corporate life. It was felt necessary that India should be able to fashion her own destiny. When countries with lesser resources and insignificant man-power were enjoying an honourable status in the international sphere, why should it be denied to India with her vast resources in men and material? This put all of us to a great deal of hard thinking. A very important cause of the growing dis-satisfaction amongst Indians was the gradual and steady disappearance of silver and gold from the country and issue of paper currency. Inflation inflamed anti-British feelings.

The immediate causes of this great Movement of 1942 were numerous and deep. Britain had suffered a severe defeat at the hands of Japan and a vast expanse of territory, right from Hong Kong to Rangoon which formerly formed a part of the British Empire, came under the Japanese Co-prosperity Sphere. British forces were retreating from Burma and leaving Burmans at the mercy and whim of the conqueror. This stampede of Imperial Britain completely shattered British prestige. The retreating British forces freely partook in the loot and plunder and set Rangoon on fire. Their treatment of refugees was inhuman and symbolic of their racial arrogance. A differential treatment was meted out

to white and non-white refugees. Many non-white people on their way to India were actually slaughtered by the British forces. People in East Bengal and Assam were forcibly ejected from their lands, where aerodromes were to be constructed, and the British forces stationed there perpetrated other kinds of atrocities on the people. Nothing was given to the people in return for their lands, thousands of whom were rendered landless. A reign of terror was established in those regions where the British forces were concentrated. All over the country force and intimidation were used against those who showed any reluctance to donate to war funds. The people were groaning under many hardships and afflictions caused by the war which was not of their seeking. They were put under a very rigorous cut in the civil supplies and other amenities of life. They were living in an era of growing inflation and sky-high prices. They were forced to make the utmost sacrifices for a cause which was unceremoniously imperialistic, and which was obviously designed to make the imperialistic hold on them the stiffer.

### CRIPPS' MISSION

During those anxious days when the Japanese were striking at the eastern gates of India and every thing was in confusion, Sir Stafford Cripps came to India with some proposals. At that time Britain had realized that it was not possible for her to hold the Empire together. She had received a fatal blow from the enemy and her customary arrogance had been crippled. It was the time when the British were in troubled waters. They had summoned to their assistance Australian, African and American forces. There were many interviews and a long chain of consultations, but to no purpose. Britain had not conceded any thing material to India. The Cripps Mission failed and its failure made it clear to the Indian people that Britain did not intend to relinquish her hold on India, even though the very security of the British Isles was threatened. Cripps came and went back broadcasting to the world a fresh instalment of pretensions and pretexts, vainly concealing the fact that even if Britain had to quit India she would do so only when her position became untenable and forced to do so by the invading armies of Japan. It became obvious that Britain would relinquish the mastery of India only when Japan stepped into her shoes as the new ruler.

### ASTROLOGERS' PROPHECY

Indians are a credulous people, and they have a deep-

seated faith in the science of astrology from times immemorial. Many forecasts had been made by astrologers on national and international affairs and incidentally many had come true. This further augmented the faith of the people in astrology. Many astrologers made startling prophecies about the shape of things to come. Revolutionary changes between the 13th and 23rd of August were prophesied. This shook the faith of the people more than anything else in the might and future of Britain, because according to some of the astrologers in no case would Britain rule the waves, and a mighty nation of the East was expected to appear on the horizon as the world's greatest power. An ethnic description of the nation was given, and the events, and facts also convinced the people that Japan was to come out as the greatest world power. These things were freely discussed by people at every meeting place and on the high-roads. This also contributed a good deal towards changing the mood and attitude of the Indians towards Pax-Britannica.

### NINTH OF AUGUST

The ninth of August is a red-letter day in the history of India. The happy shower of rain was expected that day, the sky was overcast with thick, black clouds, and a storm was expected which did come, though it was a political one. Britain, which looked to Pearl Harbour for a lesson, learnt that in order to succeed in crushing the nationalist uprising in India they had to take the first offensive. The offensive that the British Bureaucracy in India took against nationalist India surpassed even Pearl Harbour in meanness and deceit. It was a hit below the belt.

The A-I.C.C. session at Bombay had concluded at ten p.m. The 'Quit India' Resolution was passed and Mahatma Gandhi had indicated in his speech that he would write to Lord Linlithgow, the then Viceroy of India, but the alien rulers had no patience to wait for new attempts to be made by the Mahatma and the Congress for a peaceful settlement of the Indian problem. They had already made full preparation for the arrest of the Congress leaders and the warrants had already been issued. Mr. Puckle of the Information Department of the Government of India had issued a circular to the Provinces asking the Provincial authorities to prepare a strong case against the Congress and its demands. This left nobody in doubt that Britain was unwilling to concede the Congress demand for national independence. The entire resources of the Government

were being harnessed to crush the Congress nationalist India. At the same time Government prepared plans to spread anti-India propaganda in foreign countries and thereby rob the Congress of International support and sympathy. Mr. Duff Cooper had already broadcast throughout the world the infamous "50 Talking Points" against India and had levelled grave charges against India. The country was presented as a land of barbarians and savages incapable of governing themselves. He made every effort to outmatch Miss Mayo and the Government of India was said to have provided him with every help and assistance. The Indian Press acknowledged him as 'Bluff Cooper'.

All the members of the Working Committee and Provincial and District leaders were arrested. Searches were made in their houses and the property of many was confiscated. Family members of the leaders were put to many difficulties and mental agonies making one reminiscent of Nazi concentration camps. The Press was gagged and securities of many newspapers were confiscated. Various Ordinances and Defence of India Rules came and replaced all other rules and laws. Use of these ordinances was made to arrest the growth of patriotic and nationalistic ideas and ideals and the children of the motherland who had the best interest of their country at heart, and who were rendering faithful invaluable service to the country were accused of being dangerous to the country and to its civil life. They were treated as Fifth Columnists and traitors and as such, were put behind prison bars. The Congress which kept aloft the banner of India's independence and fought bravely for national honour and freedom was declared an unlawful organisation. The Congress Office, its funds and its property were confiscated and, for all practical purposes, the country was put under Martial law. India, in the words of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, had become 'a big prison' and those outside British prisons were faced with very awkward and terrific situations. Their miseries were further aggravated by the absence of their leaders from their midst. The Military and Police did things which even an occupationary force would not dare to do. Indians, driven to desperation, and in the absence of responsible leaders to give them hope, encouragement and suitable counsel, were driven to revolt against the Government. Thus the movement was forced on India in 1942 by the British who had lost much of their honour and international repute and dignity owing to their defeat at the hands of the Japanese. They wanted to make good the loss thus sustained by crushing nationalist India and the

Congress by all means at their command, thus showing to the world that they were still capable of holding together the remnants of the empire,

### 3—LEADERSHIP

Every movement needs leadership, a subjective factor that shapes, alters and gives purpose and direction to the mass-energy released through the pressure of objective conditions. It devises the strategy of offence and defence by which the objective is to be attained. The Indian National Congress has provided the Indian people with such leadership in its effort to get rid of an oppressive and alien state-machine throughout the period connected with the permanent causes, leading to the 1942 storm. Particularly during the years following the great awakening caused through the events of the first World War (1914-18), the Congress grew into a well-knit organisation reaching out far and wide into the whole country and leading its people in all their woes and activities, economic, social and political. Through experience and foresight, it evolved a new technique of non-violent Non-co-operation and Satyagraha, to achieve the object most dear to the heart of the people of India viz., liberation from Imperialist bondage. Mahatama Gandhi provided it with a mighty leadership that stood it in times of stress and dangers in 1920-21, 1930-34 and again in 1940-41. Through these struggles and the gains and victories that followed in their wake, the people of India had grown optimistic and had faith and confidence in their leaders and also in the ultimate triumph of their cause.

### THE LEADERSHIP TRIUMPHS

In the historic crisis of 1942, the Leadership of the Congress was put to a great test and it has come out unscathed and triumphant. Never in history was a leadership placed in such a precarious—situation. The crisis it faced was not local or national, but a world crisis in all its bearings. The initiative was entirely beyond its control. The incalculable resources at the disposal of the warring groups were beyond its power of assessment. Secret and treacherous diplomacy had become unfathomable. Satanic instruments of destructive warfare had reached a point where men could not guess what was in store for them. The World around India was crumbling to pieces. Mighty empires lay prostrate at the feet of ruthless armies. Everything was in a melting pot. The world churning and foaming like the stormy ocean,

In such a crisis, the Congress had to lead and guide the 400 million people of a vast country like India to freedom. A single false move might have plunged the country into disaster and defeat from which it would not be able to rise for generations. Now, as we look back upon the terrible events of 1942-1946 in their proper perspective we can realise the wisdom, the foresight, and the resourcefulness of our leadership and above all the genius of our great leader Mahatma Gandhi, who has not only shielded us against many attacks but has turned what once appeared to be a defeat into a glorious recovery and unquestionable success.

### CAUTION, RESOLUTENESS AND DASH.

Every leadership has to punctuate its strategy and tactics with periods and moves charged with caution, resoluteness and dash. Each one of these virtues dominate strategy and tactics at various stages of a deepening crisis. At the beginning caution is the essence of true leadership. Forces have to be weighed against each other, probable move and counter-moves by opposing parties have to be forestalled and provided against and the final outcome to be guessed or rather estimated. In the early stages of an obviously fast developing war it is premature and inopportune to involve a people headlong into a crisis. The Congress leadership, therefore, used with caution and foresight. Some have blamed it for vacillation, others for weakness, yet others went to the extent of accusing it of betrayal at the moment of a revolutionary possibility. Events have not only given a lie to all these accusations but have proved beyond the possibility of any doubt the wisdom of the policy which the Congress adopted in the early stages of the war.

As the crisis deepened and a fair estimate of coming events became possible the Congress leadership was able to chalk out a plan of resolute strategy that would stand through the entire crisis. It became clear that Britain had lost its position as a first class power. Its land, sea, and air strength had been surpassed and even defeated and depleted. It lost in prestige, and its moral position in the entire world sank to the lowest depths. As a ruling nation it was showing definite signs of exhaustion, low morale and impending collapse. It was, therefore, time that a positive line of assertion and offensive be enunciated and pressed with determination. The Congress leadership prepared its demands and sounded the bugle for national mobilisation in support of these demands, and in the event of a possible

struggle and for the enforcement of its plan of attack. As weeks and months rolled by and the war approached the borders of India, the voice of Congress became more and more assertive and Congress leadership issued instructions for perfecting the organisation and raising the morale of the people on a war basis.

Then came the critical months of 1942. The rapid drive of the Japanese from Hong-kong to Akyab and the complete collapse of the British military machine had to be answered by definite action. It was an occasion when something had to be done and that too at once. Something that would provide an unarmed people with the will and determination to stand on their own legs and inspire them to make heroic efforts to create a new and better society, in place of a fast-crumbling and disintegrating social order. Indeed, it was the moment for which the people of India were waiting for generations. The social order forced upon them by an oppressive and ruthless alien Imperialism, had ground them down into abject servitude, poverty and moral and material degradation. They longed for the moment, when they could break its shackles, overthrow it and replace it by a system that was at once modern, progressive and liberal.

The summer and autumn of 1942 brought them along, with spring the message of action and revolt for liberty and prosperity. The chains of slavery seemed to fall off through nature's own inexorable laws. Would they act, or sit idle and lose the opportunity? The people wished to move forward to a revolution. Would the Congress leadership lead them now, or discredit itself and liquidate? The answer came clear and resounding. "Move ahead, with discipline, united to a man, act and break away the bounds that keep you in slavery. Feel and behave as free men, seize the land which belongs to you and govern and defend it against all possible attacks whether from the Germans, Japanese or the British." But while an army moves to conquer, its cherished land, it has to be provided with cover. May be the cover of an artillery or air force, whatever is available. Would the Congress leadership provide the moving masses with cover, a sheet-anchor which would weaken and shatter the possibility of counter attack? Would it also provide for a possible reverse? For an inconclusive action, for a retreat? We have to judge the Congress strategy and tactics by these and such other tests. Then and then alone can we properly assess its wisdom, ingenuity and resourcefulness, its strong sense of idealism, its determination to push through and win, come what may,

## IN THE GRIP OF STRUGGLE

And thus the country was led into a mighty struggle. The leaders were put behind prison-bars, an event which was not unexpected nor unforestalled. When the leaders were removed from amongst them each man was to be his or her own leader. So, the people took upon themselves the entire responsibility of defending their cause in the absence of their trusted leaders. The ruthless repression let loose by a mad imperialism generated in our nation a desire and a determination to oppose and overcome it even in the physical plane. New and daring forms of struggle and attack were planned and executed. From among the old and new soldiers of freedom personalities were thrown up who gave direction and assertiveness to the people's offensive. These personalities naturally become legendary heroes and popular idols, inspiring and sustaining the people's desire to seize power. Indeed, throughout the deepening war crisis and under the pressure of developments in other countries a school of revolutionary thought was forming in the womb of the National Congress which felt the need of improvement and revitalizing of the National strategy of attack and final seizure of power. Shri Subhash Chandra Bose became the symbol of this strategy. He attempted to further its development inside the country while he was here, and later supplemented it by his now wellknown, romantic, and legendary activities connected with the formation of the Azad Hind Govt. at Singapore, and the subsequent battles fought by the Azad Hind Fauj in Burma and on the borders of India.

Inside the country there were many, who shared his strategy, and others who developed similar plans for execution when the opportunity came. This was provided by the great revolutionary effort of the Indian people during 1942-43. We are thus richer in experience today than we were before, and when the stress and emotion of the revolution subsides, we have to look back and take stock of all these multifarious activities and analyse and study them with an impartial mind and scientific outlook, so that our National armoury and arsenal become rich and effective for the coming battles.

## HEROES OF WAR & LEADERS OF NATIONS

There is one point of vital importance which we cannot afford to forget. In a national war many heroes are discovered, many generals rise to fame. In the great war through which we have just come out Rommel, Montgo-

mery, Macarthur, Timoshenko and hoards of other generals rose to fame. It is true that, but for some of them, their countries might have suffered ignominious defeat and disrepute. But when war is over and the normal life of society is resumed we must learn to put every body in his proper place with reference to Socio-economic-politico relationship. To substitute adventurousness and generalship for national leadership is a dangerous game which may result in weakening the entire social movement.

Even from the point of view of military assessment, exploits, particular and temporary strategy have only a minor value and can only be studied as part of a whole war-strategy which involves preparation in peacetime diplomacy, general morale and, above all, a long term perspective of the struggle (attack, defence and retreat). Thus in countries like England, Russia or America, it would be wrong to give undue credit and importance to generals who fought and won difficult engagements and planned useful and effective strategies of attack and defence.

The long-term interests and destiny of a people have to be entrusted to leaders of mature judgment and long experience; to leaders who, by their proved integrity, have acquired the right to lead and guide, and who by the ideals they cherish can be trusted to construct a whole social order, suitable to the genius of a great nation.

#### *4—THE PEOPLE FORGE AHEAD*

The people, excited, bewildered and startled were eager to act; they had courage, passion, and a strong desire to be free. The growing fury of oppression and the soul-stirring events had clearly unmasked British Imperialism and they saw it in its naked, beastly form. From behind the prison walls they heard the echoes of their beloved leader's (Mahatma Gandhi's) command "Do or die".

#### THE PROGRAMME

Who would give them a definite programme of work and assault? Did they leave behind them any concrete direction? If not, why? In the absence of such direction what were people to do? These were some of the questions which called for an answer. But when the masses are on the move they tolerate no hinderance. They catch at the crudest weapons that come in their way and use them for revolutionary purposes. This was proved once again during the stormy days following the leaders' arrests. Somehow it became current that destruction and disloca-

tion of the Imperialist State-machine was the first task. It is stated (and it is also a fact) that Mr. Amery, the then Secretary of State for India, in a broadcast elaborated an alleged 11-point Congress programme of dislocation and sabotage. Be that as it may, the people rose to a man in vast areas and like an avalanche uprooted every symbol of British authority that came in their way. Police stations were burnt or razed to the ground, post offices looted, rail-tracks for miles on disappeared as if by magic, Govt. records were burnt and in innumerable other ways Govt. authority was challenged and destroyed.

### WHO GAVE THE PROGRAMME ?

It became later on a matter of considerable and bitter controversy as to who gave the programme. Some attribute it to the brain-wave of Mr. Amery. Others say the Axis radio and the broadcasts of Shri Subhas Chandra Bose gave currency to it. Still others throw responsibility upon those who escaped arrest in the first round and were free for some time to think and chalk-out a line of action. All this is irrelevant to the issue at this stage of the narrative. It is admitted that when the first wave of mass indignation passed off it left behind an intense revolutionary situation. In Bombay the first signs of organised revolutionary activity became visible with the formation of the Council of Action, in which many of the unarrested Congress leaders took part. A Congress press and a radio station were organised and through them directions were issued to scattered comrades and the general people regarding the next items of activity. Emphasis was laid on destruction and dislocation of the means of communication, development of barter economy in the villages, boycott of Govt. currency and opposition to the police and the army. Seizure of Govt. institutions like police stations, post offices, godowns, Courts etc., was advocated and directions were given to bring about strikes by workers and employees in mills, factories, schools and colleges.

This programme, colourful and promising as it was at once appealed to the people and specially to the youth, who assumed leadership of the movement and became the soul and centre of it. Youth everywhere has a special liking for blood and takes real delight in shedding it because it calls for the release of all the energies and latent powers of man. This explains why Indian youth, like his brethren in other countries, preferred a blood-stained path through which he hoped to reach the temple

of liberty. The people had neither the time nor patience to weigh the pros and cons of the programme and policy, thus made handy to them, nor was it possible for them to think in a calm and dispassionate manner during those days of frustration, desperation and revenge. Moreover, the new leaders were a patriotic but inexperienced band of young men and women who had made much of bookish knowledge about Revolutions in other countries, giving very little thought to the conditions peculiar to India. They were spirited and had novel ideas before them. They had made a beautiful world for themselves but had little of originality, they had sufficient grit and dash, but lacked in patience. They could not see the futility of armed revolution, underground movement and guerilla war-fare in an unarmed country. Those who did not believe in their programme, in the absence of high ranking Congress leaders, had no courage to speak against these protagonists of armed revolution. It is not my purpose to denounce these young leaders of our revolution. Far from it, I only want to give a genuine portrayal of conditions that were obtaining during those days and a picture of the mental and psychic attitude and mood of the people.

### THE TREND OF THE MOVEMENT

In the absence of a concerted programme and experienced leaders, the people did not know what they had to do. They were only able to demonstrate their anger and opposition to the policy and repression followed by an irresponsible administration. Quite soon, wherever Mr. Amery, giving out the alleged Congress programme, was heard, there was a wave of attacks and raids on Governmental symbols of authority, and an organized attack was made in which all the adult males and females, seething with agitation, participated. The Government did not lag behind and it met the insurgents with heartless assaults and repression. The centres of these political storms were mostly those places and provinces where the people had been hard-hit by the economic crisis aggravated by the war or where the Congress leadership had its greatest hold upon the masses and where the objective conditions favouring revolution had fully matured. The districts of Assam Valley, the Western districts of Bengal, Midnapur, Bankura, the entire province of Bihar, the coal mines and war industries and the eastern districts of the United Provinces, the coastal areas of Orissa, such as Balasore, Puri, East Godavari and Guntur in Andhra Ramanadh and Coimbatore in Tamilnad, West and East Khandesh and the Satara dis-

trict in Maharashtra, the Nepal borders, and the Baroch district in Gujerat, became the storm centres of this movement, because it was here, in these districts, that the people were well-educated, the Villages well-organized and were the centres of military recruitment. These were the places where geographical conditions urged the 'people to pursue this programme with zeal; where the formation of *morchas* could successfully be made; where Congress had its greatest hold on men's minds; where geographical facilities could be had to conduct the prolonged and sustained guerilla warfare; where the people had inherited the glorious traditions of freedom's battles since those great days of the Indian Mutiny of 1857; where repression by the authorities was great ; and where people whose relations were in the army were eager to free them from military bondage, by forcing the liberation of the country as a whole.

The other peculiarity about this movement was that generally its tempo was the greatest in those areas which were vulnerable to attack by the Japanese either by sea, land or air. In these areas people had grown very bitter against the British authorities and had lost all faith in them because of the latter's callous and arbitrary actions with regard to the prosecution of the war efforts. There the people were tormented, tortured and treated as cattle. They were sandwiched between two evils—the aggressive ruler and the invading hordes of Japan. Death at any rate was the lot of the people of these areas. Then why not die a martyr's death, they questioned themselves, and plunged with all fury and determination in the movement. That is why the people of Puri, the Districts of Eastern Godavari, Guntur and Contai in Bengal, all coastal districts, took a leading part in the movement. I do not mean to enumerate all the factors responsible for making these places the centres of this movement. What I really want to show is that these were the areas where the movement took its full shape and attained its full dimensions, and again, these were the areas which were greatly affected by it. Over and above these factors, there were other reasons which made these areas the centres of the movement.

Thus, the movement was a terrific storm, very swift in speed and intensely cruel in nature. Thousands of people were killed in it, millions of people took part in it in some way or the other. The organised shape of the movement was effaced after five or six months. The Country was put under

Marital Law and the military came into prominence. Government has given some facts and figures about the movement. I give below the figures as given by the Government :—

No. of persons killed in firing by Police or Military	940
No. of persons injured in firing by Police or Military	1,630
No. of occasions when firing resorted to	538
No. of persons arrested	60,229
No. of persons detained	18,000
No. of places where Military was called out	60
No. of places where air bombing was resorted to (Patna, Bhagalpore, Nadia, Monghyr, Talchera & Tamluk)	6
No. of stations burnt or destroyed (till December)	318
No. of places where telephone and telegraph wires were tampered with	12,000
No. of post offices raided	945
(of this 60 were completely destroyed and 252 seriously damaged, many by fire)	
No. of derailments	59
Loss suffered by the Railway through damage to rolling stock	Rs. 18,00,000
Damage to trucks	" 9,00,000
Damage to station buildings	" 8,50,000
Damage to Ancillary equipment	" 6,50,000
Loss of cash and other valuables	" 2,00,000

In addition to these furniture and equipment in post and telegraph offices valued at over Rs. 1,00,000 were destroyed. The number of school buildings damaged or destroyed must run into many hundreds.

According to Government reports the Military had to be called at sixty places, police opened fire about 538 times and bombs were dropped from aeroplanes six times. The Government also confess that the public made organised raids on police *chaukis*, post offices, stations, and other state buildings and in the course of a melee between the people and the suppressing police, many rounds were fired. The people have got their own figures. After the arrest of the leaders most of the newspapers stopped publication and the rest were not allowed to publish news with regard to the movement.

The following secret report issued by the Supply Department amply gives an idea, as to what extent the war effort was impeded by this peoples' upsurge :

### THE SECRET REPORT

(Oct. 1942.)

1. "The Congress movement has had its effect on the Textile mills, particularly those in Ahmedabad, where it is understood about 90% of the spinners have left for their homes. In Madras the strike in the Buckingham & Carnatic Mills which started on 25th. August and still continues is most significant in so far as they are the largest contributors in Khakis. Of the 10,000,000 (one crore) yards monthly 4,500,000 ( forty five lakhs ) yards came from them. They have also specialised in the production of certain classes of Ducks which others have not been able to manufacture satisfactorily.

There have also been strikes for varying periods in Baroda, Indore, Nagpur and Delhi. The total loss of production in the first month of strike is estimated at about 2,50,00,000 ( two and a half crore ) yards. Loss in woollens is also estimated at about the same figure i.e. two and a half crore yards.

There has, however, been no effect of the strike on Government Clothing Factories ( where only sewing is done ) as they all had reserve stocks for two months. But the stocks of sewing cottons are hardly for two weeks, and this too so unevenly distributed that some centres like Lahore have almost no stocks. The most serious factor, therefore, of the movement is the closing down of the Ahmedabad Calico Mills and M/S Hathisingh & Co. who are the chief producers of sewing cotton.

2. The premier cigarette producing concern, The Imperial Tobacco Co-with its factories in Calcutta, Bombay, Bangalore and Saharanpur, is likely to experience considerable delay in their deliveries. Their Monghyr factory which is their source of supply of all cigarette paper and other printed material is reported to have been seriously damaged. No Communication with the factory has however been possible so far.

3. Due to the disturbances in Cawnpur and other leather manufacturing centres, loss of production to the extent of fifty percent is reported.

4. About a lakh sawn railway sleepers and about 1,20,000 bamboos are reported to have been burnt in the Jaipur State where the situation is understood to have become so serious that forest operations may have to be suspended.

5. The effect of the movement has also been considerable on wheat and wheat products. The Mills mainly affected are the group of Ganesh Flour Mills, Delhi, where it is understood that all the workshop tools have been taken away by the rioters and the generating plant was also seriously damaged. Their 'B' Mill is still closed. The loss of stores in looting is estimated at over 150 tons and loss in production at about 4,000 tons."

There are some very important features of this movement which were not found in the other freedom movements of India. I single out three such features, firstly the expansion to the Indian States, secondly, the mighty contribution of the students who stepped in to fill the gap caused by the arrest of the leaders and their detention and who assumed the total leadership of this movement, thirdly, the sympathetic attitude of the Muslim masses despite Mr. Jinnah's outbursts to the contrary. It was, indeed, for the first time that a freedom movement spread out to the Indian states. The States people allied themselves with the people of British India. The strong waves of this movement swept away the showy, artificial walls of the States and the movement found the State people equally enthused for and prepared to fight for a common cause. It assumed greater intensity in the Central Indian States, Gwalior, Baroda, etc. In the Deccan States also the movement gained in momentum particularly in Mysore. The State people made many brave attempts to seize power, particularly in Orissa, Maharashtra and Mysore. Naturally, this mass awakening and political consciousness in the Indian States was due primarily to the activities of the Praja Mandals. That is the reason that even after the cessation of open hostilities—given birth to by this movement, the Praja Mandals grew in strength, gained prestige and power and almost everywhere the rulers were compelled to come to an agreement with them.

So far as students are concerned, there is no doubt that they formed the reserve strength of the Indian National Movements. Before the 9th August the students were mostly under Communist influence, but after that great day in Indian history the students everywhere were

full of courage, sense of sacrifice and service. Their contribution to the national struggle was so great that it is at once awe-inspiring and it won for the student world universal sympathy and admiration. Thousands of them left schools and colleges, most of them went underground and the rest led the masses to the best of their ability. They faced bullets and *lathi* charges, but still remained unmoved, unbent, and marched on. Some of them went to the villages, explained their programme to the villagers and carried on in the manner they understood best. It would have been too much to expect from these unexperienced yet brave young men and women to conform and adhere strictly to the Congress cult of non-violence, for they had no previous training or relations with any previous movement. The brave students of the Bombay Presidency were, first and foremost to resist the all powerful bureaucracy and to face bullets and *lathi* charges. They were followed by students of Ahmedabad, Ahmednager, Poona, Sholapur and other towns in the province. Deeply moved and infuriated by the arrest of their leaders and fellow-countrymen the young men and women of Bihar, U. P., C. P., Bengal and Assam took the lead in organising processions and demonstrations in connection with that staggering, leaderless rising. In the Nanda Bazar in Dhulia District and Shera district in the Bombay Presidency shocking atrocities of the most barbarous type resulting in the deaths of many were perpetrated on the students. In one division of Benares in the U.P. 32,000 students were expelled from schools and colleges, hundreds of schools and colleges in the land remained locked every month and the students conducted and strengthened the struggle. Students of the Benares Hindu University injected new life in all the Eastern districts. They were galvanized to action and assumed the leadership of these districts. In spite of the Anglo-Muslim League conspiracy hatched up against the Congress and Mr. Jinnah's open declaration that in case the Congress launched the movement, there would be a civil war in the country; in spite of the support he had pledged to the bureaucracy in crushing the Congress, there were not only no communal disturbances, but the Muslims actually rubbed shoulders with their compatriots of other communities in their noble war against the alien rulers and many more openly sympathised with Congress and secretly helped the movement. At most places, particularly in the Eastern districts of U.P. and Behar in general and Purniya district in particular, in Chittagong and Sachar districts in Bengal, the Muslim masses openly participated

in the movement and bore the brunt of the repression with their Hindu brethren. All this clearly showed to the world that the Indian Muslims were as much anti-British and anti-imperialist as the Hindus were and also that Muslim leadership failed to organize the anti-British feelings of the Muslim masses in a systematic way and to rouse their patriotic feelings. This movement, in fact, brought the Hindus and Muslims together, as it did to develop an All-India attitude in those provincially inclined.

### *5—CONTROVERSIES.*

The British Government had always been propagating anti-Congress and anti-India views all over the world. The British propaganda machine was always kept to humiliate India before the world and to divest her of all the glory, to rob her of the sympathies of the peoples of the world, and curiously enough the Indian Exchequer had to pay for it. True to their past traditions they spread many canards and false news about India and the Congress. They flashed the fantastic news to the world that Congress leadership had a concerted plan of action involving sabotage and acts of violence. Therefore, Congress was responsible for all the disturbances in the country. Unfortunately, even some Congressmen who were obviously tired and had retired from active politics fell victim to this sinister propaganda. They condemned the people for acts of violence. According to them it was the movement started mainly by the mis-guided and the irresponsible elements in the country, specially the youth. I differ with them on this issue, and hold that such a view is very erroneous and harmful to the nation. I fully subscribe to the view that acts of violence and secret underground movements strike at the very root of an organized movement, and our movement would have been considerably strengthened if these factors had been absent. Our's was a mighty upsurge of a nation, and the movement was essentially non-violent, strictly conforming to Congress principles and ideas. It is just possible that the masses driven to desperation, horrified and very much enraged at the way the custodians of peace and order were behaving, behaved in a somewhat violent manner here and there, might have thrown bricks in return of bullets, might have tried to burn some police stations which were tyrant's strong-holds when their own houses were pillaged; but, to say that the movement as a whole was violent and against Congress professions is as unjust and absurd

as it is full of lies and half-truths and devoid of all sense of balanced judgement. In fact the people went on repeating the slogans left to them by their soldiers and wishing victory to them. They wanted the officials to acknowledge allegiance to the free Congress rule, and freely express it by co-operating with them.

Our people, at many places, showed admirable courage and restraint. There were many awkward situations created by the ruthless method of the police and army when the people could easily loose their temper and resort to acts of violence, but did not raise their hands against the officials and did not strike at them. Barring a few cases of disorganised violence, this movement was run in a perfectly disciplined way and there was a free release of organised strength of the people. The base human passions of violence and indiscipline were not allowed to unleash themselves. It was due to the organized strength of the people that in the Assam Valley alone some 20 lacs of people freely trespassed and broke all Government rules and regulations and attacked courts, police stations and post offices. In a similar way in Bihar, Eastern U.P., and Karnatak they took possession of most of the Government institutions, but did not kill a single Government official. There were many other matchless examples of sacrifice, unity, service and patriotism demonstrated by the people in an organised manner harming none, inflicting physical injury on none, but promoting the movement and the national cause, at the same time.

Admittedly, there were a few acts of violence ; but as compared to the combined efforts, made by the people in a non-violent manner and their achievements these pale into insignificance! At many places after every ten minutes firing was resorted to by the police, many people died and the wounded were carried back by their people. Still they continued their resistance, still they kept on marching everywhere. It proves beyond doubt that they were perfectly non-violent throughout and were trained in the art and science of non-violent resistance. It is unthinkable that in situations like these, when crowds were fired upon several times at short intervals, and trampled under the hoofs of horses, when *athu* charges of the severest nature were being made, they should have remained calm and not wreaked vengeance. The beauty of the non-violent movement, as it essentially was, lay in this that despite few regrettable lapses, caused by the severest provocation, the people did not attempt to commit murder. This shows.

that though there was absence of leaders and an organisation to control the passions, the people demonstrated a marvellous sense of discipline and self-control. This gives the lie to the British propaganda and the utterances made by British spokesmen and their Indian hirelings.

### WHY WAS NO PROGRAMME GIVEN?

It has become a matter of great controversy how the leadership failed to leave behind it a concrete programme of action. Was it because the arrests came without warning or the question of making up a definite programme was advisedly left over?

To those who know Gandhiji's ways the answer comes straight and convincing. It is obvious that a programme can only be given when a machinery for implementing it is available and can be expected to sustain the attack of an unscrupulous opponent. In the nature of things as then pertaining it was evident that whenever the conflict commenced leaders would be lifted from among the people, who would be left to guide themselves. Under these limitations it would have been highly unfair if a cut and dried revolutionary programme was given to a people without leadership. Gandhiji intended to give a detailed programme if he hoped to mature his plans and find out if he would be left free to lead the people in a non-violent struggle. In this case, however, his arrest came about and his philosophy and strategy demanded that the people should be given freedom to choose their own activities, suitable to their capacity and temperament. Ordering them in the military manner was both suicidal and unfair. Orders can be given by officers who actually lead in action, and remain with the soldiers. In the absence of such a guarantee the only course left open was to give general directions and slogans, cautions and warnings. These were given again and again in the speeches of leaders as the tempo of the movement rose and headed to a pitch. Particularly we find them in the historic speech delivered by Gandhiji, on the 8th. August at the A-I.C.C.

There is another and very important reason for not giving a detailed programme. No general can ever anticipate all the situations that might develop in the course of a campaign. To give a definite directive to his forces when he is not likely to be free to revise them, if the need arose, is suicidal. It enhances the moral

responsibility of leadership without providing adequate guidance to the fighting forces. It puts them in an awkward situation and makes retreat, flank attacks, covering movements, the impossible. It gives away all the cards in the possession of a wise general and puts him at the mercy of his crafty and unscrupulous foes. From these considerations it becomes obvious that, placed in the peculiar conditions as we were, the drafting and publishing of any programme in advance would not only have been suicidal, but would have actually proved useful to the enemy.

### GOVT. CHARGES AND THEIR REFUTATION

These false charges and insinuations made against the Congress would have been refuted if the Congress leaders had been given the opportunity to speak in defence. Those outside had either no courage to speak the truth or in their anxiety to curry favour with the rulers did not want to contradict them. The fact that even today the British Government has not been able to prove all the charges and has no courage to put these charges before an impartial tribunal proves beyond doubt that neither was the movement violent nor was the Congress responsible for the disturbances. In fact, the Government itself was responsible for these disturbances and definitely chose to establish a reign of terror in India. It made every police constable a real autocrat, so much so that even the judiciary was forced to play a subservient rôle to the executive. Still, at many places the judiciary passed many strictures on the executive and held the Government's assault on the people to be criminal.

### 6—*THE NON-VIOLENT TECHNIQUE.*

A mighty force like British Imperialism needs the united and concentrated efforts of a nation to fight it out. People aspiring for liberty can put up a fight against slavery in three ways only. Either there must be organized and united non-violence, organized violence or unorganized violence. There are many factors which contributed to the choice of the first method of warfare in India; the most important being our cultural heritage, the internal condition of the country, the psychic make-up of our people, and the advent of Mahatma Gandhi, with his cult of non-violence in the political field of India. Mahatma Gandhi

had received the light in South Africa, and had used this weapon of non-violence against the racial arrogance of the Whites of South Africa. Under his leadership many movements were started in India and ignoring their immediate success or failure, almost all of them made the people courageous, bold and patriotic and filled them with a spirit of self-sacrifice and national order. This also trained the people in the science of non-violent warfare and with the lapse of time the next movement found them more responsive and better prepared. The Congress emerged more powerful after every struggle and the nation as a whole began to get rid of the inferiority complex and fear of the masters. The beauty of non-violence is that the fighters do not know what defeat is, nor do they surrender to any power, however great. They do not compromise their principles for transitory gain. The Congress leadership has been perfecting its technique of warfare and giving to the people training in self-control and self-restraint. The 'Open rebellion' was the logical consequence of the non-violent struggle of the nation fighting for its liberty. The Congress, under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi, denounced all the underground activities and use of secret weapons. The Congress wanted to win for the country her lost freedom and to maintain it. Freedom gained by the sword cannot be maintained forever because it is soon lost by the sword itself. The Congress did not want India to suffer defeat. Besides this, it wanted to set an example to the rest of the world that a noble cause can be fought by noble methods. Objective conditions of the country were also not favourable to start a violent revolution because the Congress had realized the futility of armed revolutions and struggles made by an unarmed people against the mechanised forces of the modern world. It is absurd even to imagine that the Congress would have chosen for India the path of ruin and destruction so often trodden by the small countries of Europe and other parts of the world. The Congress, therefore, had never planned a violent revolution in India, and all those occasional lapses and acts of violence, of which much capital was made by the British Government, were the logical products of violence, bullying and other outrages, assaults and molestations resorted to by the latter. One cannot be expected to be always in his or her wits, within the bounds of decency and non-violence, when the other party is not tired and ashamed of its barbarities and rude behaviour. People could not be expected to keep perfectly calm and to keep the passions within control, when an organised and violent

attack, in an unwarranted manner, was being made on their legitimate rights and demands, specially when those in whom they had reposed full confidence, and whose words were final and authoritative to them were no longer in their midst.

## OPEN REBELLION

All of us had become tired of British rule, its failure to redeem past promises, and its incompetence to rule the people efficiently and to protect their lives and properties against an invading army. Even Mahatma Gandhi, who sometime back was the greatest friend of the British and had shed honest tears when West minister Abbey and the British Museum were bombarded by the Germans, and who in the beginning of the war, was entirely for unconditional cooperation with the British, had given a spiritual challenge to the British. He preferred civil war to the administration then in power and made no secret of it. He strongly advocated change of the administration from British to Indian hands, and was prepared to take any risks during the interregnum. He appealed to the nation that everybody should think in terms of freedom and should act as a free citizen. The slogan 'Quit India' was the culminating point of the changed attitude of Mahatma Gandhi and the Congress. The passing of the 'Quit India' resolution at the Bombay session of the A-I.C.C. by an overwhelming majority proved that the whole country, as represented by the Congress, shared the views of the Mahatma and was for an open rebellion against the Government. We are all proud of this open rebellion because in every way, its scope, its strategy, its ideals and organisation, it was radically different from other movements, and definitely brought us much nearer to our goal.

## ITS IDEALS

The urgency of a freedom movement was felt by the Congress at a time when the British had left the peoples of Malaya, Singapore and Burma at the mercy of the Japs and had proved that neither were the British powerful enough to face the enemy, nor had they evinced keen interest in the defence of these regions. This naturally made responsible Indians very anxious to look after the defence of their country themselves. So the ideal of the movement became the winning for the country full sovereignty and un-trammelled liberty to manage her

own affairs and to defend herself against the Japs who had great designs against India and wanted to make her a vassal country and a market for Japanese products. We aimed at turning this war into a real and genuine people's war.

## THE STRATEGY

Really speaking the Congress had aimed at creating a strong psychological front against the ruling power. It wanted to establish a national Government in India which could meet the challenge of the time, and would win for the country complete freedom without coming to actual blows with the British. Secondly, the Congress wanted that the sympathies and moral support of all the great powers of the world, especially America, China and Russia, should be manoeuvred in support of India's legitimate demands and aspirations. And, thirdly, to give leadership to all the suppressed peoples of the world and to organise them against Imperialism and fascism. All this needed the creation of two strong fronts, uniting and organising the country's anti-British feelings and increasing the tempo of the nation's bitterness against their existing national and international status and position, and harnessing the passions of the people for justice and freedom. This was the first front. The second was to impress upon the Allies the need of exerting pressure upon the British to hand over to Indians the reins of the country's administration, so that India could be a much more useful ally and a real arsenal of freedom and democracy.

## SLOGANS

We have had many slogans in the past, but none so appealing and none so much in conformity with the people's ideals and aspirations as the 'Quit India' slogan. This slogan epitomised the nation's bitterness against the alien Government and the abhorrence for the existing administration and its earnest wish that the British should immediately leave the shores of India. From the Himalayas to Cape Comorin and from the Godavari to Burma the people repeated the slogan and felt a curious sensation and a strong hunger for freedom. This slogan was more responsible for the success of this movement than any thing else, because the enthusiasm that it created among the people was unprecedented and unique.

## 6—PHILOSOPHY OF THE MOVEMENT

In the past we had struggled to break a few laws and regulations of the State and thus demonstrate our opposition to the various unjust laws enforced on the country. But, at no other time did we openly declare that we were up against the administration as a whole. In 1942 we freely expressed ourselves against British rule and openly organised ourselves to attack the administration from all sides. It had lost much of its prestige and moral justification to exist, because of its failure to prove equal to the great tasks which lay ahead, and had become a liability to the people. The continuance of that type of administration meant the infliction of tortures and innumerable privations on the people. This morally depraved and corrupt administration had no right to continue and it was the duty of the nation to destroy it. This was the philosophy behind the movement of 1942. By not consulting the nation, when India was declared a belligerent and thus inviting the Japs to this country as an invader, Britain showed lack of political foresight and was deprived of India's moral support. This national humiliation had angered every patriotic Indian and everybody was resolved to wreak vengeance. In short avenging the wrongs done to India, without shedding blood and in an organized, non-violent and disciplined way, and abolishing all the vestige of slavery and injustice, was the philosophy of the movement.

## STRENGTH OF NON-VIOLENCE

We had launched our movement at a time when all the small countries of Europe had been over-run by Germany. And when Germany had proved that it was the mightiest nation on earth because it was the most mechanized military power; when Germany had enslaved many nations; when Japan had occupied most of China and had trampled upon the sacred soil of many Far Eastern countries; when the fate of many more nations was hanging in the balance the frail old Mahatma declared 'Open Rebellion' on the 8th of August, 1942, against Britain which, though reduced to a second-rate power, was still powerful enough to ruin the country, only if the Congress had advocated a violent revolution. But the Congress chose the better way. It freely preached open rebellion, and asked the people to behave as a free nation,

attack the administration, and assert themselves; but it also asked the country to prove itself worthy of the great traditions of the Congress and the cultural legacy that we had inherited from the past. The people were directed to organize themselves as a body of brave, non-violent fighters at a time when the Allies were busy manufacturing destructive weapons on a scale unprecedented in history in order to defeat Germany and the other Axis Powers. The Congress had emerged triumphant even though the British remain here as rulers. It has now an enviable international reputation which the Allies, though they have defeated the Axis powers, have lost. Britain, which was a party in defeating the Axis Powers, had to yield to the Congress, release its leaders unconditionally, and effect a compromise. This has heightened our national prestige and this has again proved the efficacy of non-violence as a weapon against a mighty nation, because non-violence, after all, is the cult and weapon of those who have a just cause and who have a very high moral stature, and who have breathed in the atmosphere of a real and superb culture. Non-violence has the change of hearts and minds as its goal, and we discern real change of heart in the British towards India today. The greatest victory that a non-violent fighter can achieve is a complete negation of the self in the interest of the expanded self, i.e. society or a nation. The Congress leaders were given many allurements and prospects of release if only they disclaimed the August Resolution. But they would not do so and chose the path of suffering and sacrifice.

### MEASURES OF REPRESSION

There have been changes in the methods and measures of repression adopted by the Government from 1919 to 1942, whenever the Congress launched the national movement. After every movement the Congress gained in strength and power but to combat these patriotic movements the Government also perfected its machinery of repression and evolved many techniques. In 1930 it brought into use Section 144 Criminal Procedure Code and in 1942, when it trembled on the brink of disaster, it established a reign of Martial Law. The traditional method of mass imprisonment, detention without trial, imposition of collective fines, and lathi charges, was considered out-of-date and ineffective. A new technique of oppression was developed. Mr. R. C. Neogy, M.L.A.,

(Central), while demanding an inquiry into the police excesses perpetrated during the movement classified the repressive measures adopted by the Government under the following heads:

1. General pillage and arson, and wanton damage to property by the police and the military even in places unaffected by hooliganism. This happened particularly in the villages of Bihar and the United Provinces.

2. Shooting at random in places not affected by any hooliganism, "just for the purpose of creating an impression", to borrow the well-known expression of certain Martial Law authorities in the Punjab. This happened particularly in Calcutta.

3. Random shooting of innocent people in a locality affected by hooliganism, after the hooligans had already left the place, more with the object of chastising the locality than punishing the criminal mob, which could not be traced at the moment. This happened in Delhi, Calcutta and elsewhere.

4. Assault or shooting of non-violent crowds or individuals without proper warning. Technical violation of the curfew order by ignorant and innocent people is believed to have been promptly met with shooting at sight, leading to death in many cases. This was done particularly in Delhi.

5. Excessive force used in dispersing non-violent crowds.

6. Merciless assaults, particularly whipping, insults and indignities on all and sundry on the same principles that actuated the imposition of collective fines. In some cases, whipping and similar assaults are reported to have led to death.

Mr. Neogy, in his speech in the Central Assembly, referred to many acts of repression and many charges of offences committed by the Government during the movement. In his speech he referred to the conversation between a member of the Council of State and the Leader of the National War Front of Muzaffarpur.

Mr. K. C. Neogy said, "This gentleman, in his capacity as the district leader of the National War Front Movement, had occasion to visit some of the affected villages in the district of Muzaffarpur to which he belongs, and in the course of his tours, in the company of the Chairman of the District Board of Muzaffarpur and the

Secretary of the National War Front Movement, he saw sights which he says would haunt him to his dying day,—sights not due to the action of hooligans but sights resulting from the wanton acts of damage, loot and arson which were indulged in by the police and the military. He said:

“Troops and police were let loose on the countryside, and in the course of my tours in the villages as leader of the National War Front for my native district, I had reports, of vandalism, of wanton destruction and loot of private property, of whole villages burnt, of extortion of money on threat of arrest and in some cases of actual physical torture....what these eyes of mine have seen in the villages: all wealthy shops in the bazaar looted, entire villages burnt not by the mob but by the soldiers and by the police: and I must confess that these sights would haunt me to my dying day.”

Referring to a notice served under Section 80 of C. P. C., by a zamindar in the district of Ghazipur on the Governments of India and U. P., claiming damages for wanton destruction of property committed by the military and the police in his village, Mr. Neogy said:

“I have got a complete copy of the notice in my hand. He first of all gives his own pedigree of loyalty. He mentions what his grandfather did and how his services were rewarded, what is the amount of income-tax that he pays, and finally, this is not without some amount of grim humour, he reproduces a certificate that was awarded to him only in the year 1933 in recognition of his meritorious services in connection with the putting down of the civil disobedience movement. Now, the House will soon realise what has happened to him, in spite of all his faithful and highly appreciated services. He adds that he is an Honorary Magistrate. Now Sir, I come to the most important portion of this notice. He Says:

“ ‘ On the 26th August 1942, at about 3 p. m. my manager sent a man to me and through the message of my manager I came to know that four European soldiers accompanied by about 150 military men armed with rifles and along with the Sub-Inspector, Nandganj Police Station, came to my village in the afternoon of the 24th August and asked all the male members of my village including my manager and servants to leave the village and file on kutchra road, which passed through the village, on pain of being shot at. The male members

including children came out of the village and sat on the kutchra road. Thereafter, the four European soldiers along with the military men entered the village leaving a few military men to guard the villagers sitting on the road. In the village the women were asked to come out of the houses on threat of being shot at, should they refuse to do so. When the women came out the soldiers deprived them of all their ornaments which they were putting on their person and after that they raided the houses and looted cash, jewellery, ornaments, clocks, etc. They also raided my house. The Sub-Inspector warned the European soldiers that the house belongs to an Honorary Magistrate who was a loyal British subject but the European soldiers asked the Sub-Inspector to shut up. They then looted my house and broke some of the valuable furniture and articles. I have been put to a loss of Rs. 30,405-7-3 approximately as detailed hereunder on account of the acts of vandalism committed by the said soldiers."

I have tried to show how the Government was fully prepared to strangle the nationalist feelings of India, how it used the most brutal, and barbarous methods for repressing and suppressing a nation fighting for its just cause, how the base passions of the police and the military were let loose and how even machineguns were used to break the organized strength of the people. In this book I have not tried to discuss all the methods and measures adopted by the Government to suppress the movement, because my sole object has been to present to the reader a full picture of the activities and efforts made in an organised, disciplined and non-violent manner. The Government have published a book in which the entire responsibility for the disturbances, acts of violence, arson, loot and plunder has been thrown on the Congress and in the same book effort has been made to show that the Congress movement was not broad based and had a very narrow scope. I need not dwell at length on these contradictions because the whole book is intended to reveal to the intelligent reader that whatever Government had said was only part of a grand conspiracy against the Congress and Nationalist India, planned by the British Government and financed by the Indian Exchequer,

## 7—THE BALANCESHEET

After every movement or struggle for freedom,

there comes a period of reaction when we are in a position to survey our past records, and make correct estimates of our gains and losses. After a lapse of over three years we are now in a position to make a review of the movement as a whole and find out what we have lost, what we have gained, what mistakes we have committed and what strength and prestige we have added to our national life. In fact, our gains are far more than our losses in men and material, because ours was a non-violent movement in which our chief aim was to bring about a change in the psychology and temperament of the British. Taken in that light, the benefits that accrued to us were far more numerous and significant, because the British, more than at any other time during their rule in India, felt that they could no longer stay in India as her rulers, and that they should try to win the friendship and sympathies of the Congress for their own benefit and security. The prisoners of 1942 are today at the helm of Indian affairs. This is, indeed, a unique achievement for non-violent India. If through this movement, India has gained so great a reputation and has come so near her goal of "Purna Swaraj", I think our losses have been fairly out-balanced, and in a way proved extremely useful in divesting the tyrants of the moral support of the whole civilised world.

Since 1919, when Gandhiji made his debut in Indian politics, we have launched many freedom movements; and after every movement we gained in experience, courage, morale, organisational skill, sense of discipline and sacrifice, and evolved a new technique for the next movement, and plunged ourselves in it with added zeal and enthusiasm. Though the movement of 1942 was not a complete success yet it was a mass upheaval, unique in history, which taught India, as also the world, great lessons, and proved the efficacy of the united, concerted and combined efforts of a nation, in a disciplined way, to achieve freedom.

## LESSONS

The first and foremost lesson that this movement taught India and the world was that even a suppressed and unarmed people can achieve freedom, if they have a strong will to freedom, and are prepared to give expression to this common will of the people in an organized and determined manner. This movement failed in that we could not drive the British out of the country. This was pri-

marily due to the stray cases of violence indulged in by the mob, which made the army and the police more oppressive and bitter, and more determined to curb the spirits of the weak and feeble. It has brought home to us the need for a strong organisation, manned and led by people of iron determination, fixed principles, balanced reason, and noble ideals. It has also impressed upon us the need for unity and comradeship among the rank and file. It has won for Mahatma Gandhi and the Congress a larger number of adherents and followers, imbued with a sense of patriotism, and an unfaltering faith in the cult of non-violence.

## OUR GAINS

Lord Birkenhead said many years ago that it was foolish to believe that the Indians actually wanted to be free, because they had not shown through their action that they really yearned to take their rightful place in the comity of nations. We demonstrated for the first time that we were determined to be free. If Lord Birkenhead were alive today he would have felt internal satisfaction at this courageous move made by the Indians to overthrow an alien and irresponsible administration. Our gains have been both external and internal.

## EXTERNAL GAINS

Startled by the universality and discipline of this uprising, most of the nations openly declared their sympathy for insurgent India. Marshal Chiang Kai-Shek, though the head of a state which was Britain's ally, openly demanded of the British to quit India. Mr. William Phillips and Col. Louis Johnson, the late President Roosevelt's special Envoys in India, submitted reports giving a faithful description of British tyranny and the determination of the Indian masses to throw off the foreign yoke. They freely opined that President Roosevelt, as the author of the 'Four Freedoms' and joint author of the 'Casablanca' and 'Teheran' Charters should ask the British to concede India's legitimate demands. Russia, though there was no official statement on India, was freely criticising the British for their Gaulliter rule in India.

Almost all the countries of the world began to look upon India as a great power of the future, which might one day show the war ridden world the way to permanent peace and international goodwill.

For all the oppressed peoples of the world, from one coast to another, India became the leader and the guide. Almost all the countries of the Far East considered themselves to be inextricably linked with India, and thought that whatever gains accrued to India would be theirs, and that the Congress movement would be of immense benefit to them, since a free India will have considerable weight, and could be counted upon to help them whenever they started similar freedom movements. They became more confident than ever that India, as represented by the Congress, would always fight for their freedom, and began to organise themselves for striking at their foreign rulers.

India figured prominently in the foreign press, and a lot of literature was written concerning it. This helped to destroy all the prejudices that most of the peoples had against us, and dispelled much of the ignorance about the Indian people and their culture.

### INTERNAL GAINS

This movement helped Indians to train themselves in the art of organising themselves for a common cause for the vindication of their honour and for the defence of their motherland. It also taught them to make use of sublime and noble ideas in a disciplined and moral way, conducive to their forward march, and expressing the suppressed feelings and bitterness against the tyrant.

An open rebellion that this movement was, it made us bold, and convinced us that through an organised revolution it was possible for us to win our freedom even though we had no arms.

It brought all sections of the people together, to fight against a common enemy and taught them not to squabble among themselves and injure the corporate and national life of the country.

We lost forever all our faith in the invincibility of the British Army, and the competence of the White Man to meet the challenge of the times in a bold and determined manner. It brought us back to ourselves and we began to discern in us a real strength, capacity and ingenuity. All this went to remove much of the inferiority complex that India was suffering from for the last so many decades.

For the first time we did what the master minds and the sages of India had bequeathed to us as our cultural legacy, because it was now that we made use of action as

preached by Lord Krishna as the principle of life, and non violence, as preached by Lord Buddha and reinterpreted by Mahatma Gandhi on a national scale our real and definite strategy.

For the first time youth played its full part in the movement. They were universally acclaimed as great heroes and the future generations can depend upon them to work wonders whenever need for their services is felt by the nation.

### OUR LOSSES

Russia was attacked by Germany first as Nationalist India was attacked by Imperialist Britain. Russia has come out triumphant from the great ordeal that she had to face, but she has lost millions of people and tons of money and other valuable things. For the defence of Stalingrad alone Russia had to make tremendous sacrifices. We, too, are very near our cherished goal, but as compared to the losses that Russia sustained our losses are very insignificant. This has happened in other countries of the world too. We had our own share of sufferings, but then freedom's war is not a joke. If a country which has been deprived of freedom for many centuries can attain it with few losses, both in men and material, they are no losses at all. But a comparative evaluation of our losses is not my purpose, because it will only amount to disloyalty to this narrative. We did sustain many losses during this movement, some reparable and others irreparable, and the mental and moral tortures that became our lot on account of such revolting incidents and the molestation of women, cannot be evaluated in terms of money. Some seven to ten thousand persons fell and succumbed to bullet wounds. About 25,000 persons at different places and different times were injured and wounded as a result of firing and lathi charges. About 10,25,003 persons were incarcerated, and about 25,000 detained. Many of them received corporal punishment because they were accused of violence, loot and arson. More than one crore took part in some way or other in the movement and suffered many hardships. About 500 villages were victims of the barbarity and brutality of the army and the police, many of them gutted and looted. According to Government estimate about one crore of rupees were realized as collective fines, but actually more than three crores of rupees were realized, and the force used by

the officials and the police while realizing the fines left deep wounds on the bodies, in the hearts and the minds of the people. It is difficult to give correct data or figures about the losses sustained by the nation during this movement, but I have no doubt that our actual losses exceeded those that are given above. I repeat, that the mental tortures and agonies that the people suffered defy all standards of measurement.

### THE STRUGGLE GOES ON

Our struggle is not yet over. Indeed, it will continue till either British Imperialism is liquidated or Britain feels that it must come to a compromise with us and concede our legitimate and just demands. The Congress is an army of liberation and the need for such an army was felt when we saw that Britain had made the exploitation of India its main objective ; when we saw that Britain would not feel the least compassion in trampling down the best interests of the nation. With the lapse of time Britain became more unjust, more oppressive, more barbarous and more devoid of ethical and moral sense. This brought all the patriotic sons and daughters of the motherland under the banner of the Congress and the Congress, as an organisation, became stronger. The moral support of the world, and the faith of the oppressed people, now shifted to it as an Anti-British organisation, well-organised, and well-disciplined. It gained power and strength in proportion as the British lost them. On the other hand, the psychology and trend of the modern world are such that Imperialism is bound to go to the dogs. Everywhere the Imperialistic structure is crumbling down like a house of cards, because it is built upon weak foundations, and has inherent contradictions in its very system. The dignity which now belongs to the Congress is primarily due to the fact that it stands for the common man, while British Imperialism is associated with draining out the blood and sapping the vitality of subject peoples. So mass-psychology and the progressive forces of the modern world have combined to strengthen the Congress. We are witnessing the grand spectacle of India's destiny passing from British to Indian hands. The nation is not so slow as not to realise this great change-over. There is only one way left to the British, if at all they wish to remain as the friends of India, and that is to be friends of the progressive forces of the world. They must effect the desired change in their economic and social policies and system. I repeat

that our struggle is not over, even though we are not very far away from our desired goal. The growing strength of the Congress, the international situation and the progressive forces of the world are combining to compel the British to change their attitude towards nationalist India's aspirations.

A struggle in its final phase is a contest between two rival wills. Our struggle which first started in 1857 in the form of the Great Mutiny, led by the disinherited chieftains of the time, who made a frantic attempt to hold to their declining power, and the disgruntled people, was put down by the superior arms and diplomacy of the new white-invader. The movement was a dis-organised one and inferior methods of violence were used. This contributed to the failure of the movement.

For decades the Indians could not conceive of any mass uprising; but at long last, as a result of certain natural compulsions, logical sequences of preceding events and Gandhiji's coming on the horizon of Indian politics and giving to the people the new weapon, a new vision and a new technique of warfare, we began to organise ourselves and march forward from one stage to another, passing through many vicissitudes in the course of our journey, until we reached a stage when every Indian had grown tired of the British rule. The entire nation was seething with discontentment and bitterness against the British, and was prepared to sacrifice its life for the independence of India. Despite many ups and downs, failures and setbacks owing to cases of disorganised violence in the past, we plunged in the movement of 1942 with unprecedented vigour, courage, determination, wisdom, skill and crystallized ideals and objectives. The beauty of non-violence is that a non-violent soldier never knows retreat, going back, surrender or fatigue. The British tried to destroy the morale of the people but firm determination on the part of the leaders was the result. On the other hand all these privations, sufferings and blood-baths have strengthened the national resolve and heightened our spirits. The will of the leaders, inspired by the higher mission and nobility of the object, is definitely stronger than the will of an alien ruler, exploiter and hypocrite—diplomat. Thus, our victory is assured, because we are stronger today than our enemy.

It is my firm faith that the needs of the time will effect a change in the shape of our future struggles. The conditions of the world as obtaining today, and the resolve

of the people that 'to enslave other peoples is as dangerous as to slave for others or serve others, will definitely develop into a struggle for all the freedom-loving peoples against national and racial injustice. It is quite possible that good sense will prevail and the British will feel that by mutual sympathy and helpfulness both England and India can progress and prosper. In that case, Britain will become friendly with India. But, in spite of this, it is certain that our struggle can cease only when British Imperialism is fully liquidated, root and branch, and our movements, directed against British Imperialism, bring to life a new India. The abolition of the last vestiges of Imperialism is a pre-requisite to the establishment of friendly relations between India and Britain. I hope and trust that Britain, impelled by the very strong need of India's friendship, will bid farewell to Imperialism and thus usher in an era of unending prosperity and progress for both the countries.

## 8—THE TWO LEADERSHIPS

Reaction follows action as night follows day. Congress leadership, known as the High Command, has times beyond number passed through this inevitable phase with added strength and popularity. It is in this period of reaction that all types of controversies arise and the leadership is faced with growing internal frustration and organizational crises, and the enemy's relentless pressure. But at no time was the leadership faced with such a formidable challenge of alternative leadership as it has been after the 1942 struggle. In fact the great uprising of the people in 1942 in various parts of the country has left behind a number of controversies. One of the fundamental controversies is regarding the new leadership and the new technique of which we are so often hearing in the Press and on the platform. This controversy arose because Mahatma Gandhi and the Working Committee disclaimed responsibility for the movement which they asserted they had not initiated. They also disapproved of the so-called new technique involving sabotage, destruction of property and dislocation of communications. This denial of responsibility has provided an opportunity to certain elements in our national movement to monopolise the so-called new technique as their own and on this basis the alternative leadership is being acclaimed.

The problem is very vital and cannot be brushed

aside as trivial or a mere passing phase. If the solution of transfer of power from the British imperialists into the hands of the representatives of the Indian people does not come about peacefully as a result of negotiations and parleys that are in progress at present, and conflict begins, this problem of leadership and technique will become all the more important and vital, and will have to be discussed thread-bare and solved before the nation can move ahead on the path of struggle and victory.

### THESIS OF THE NEW LEADERSHIP

The assumption behind the new technique is that the national movement in India has now outgrown the stage of agitation and reached the stage of seizure of power; that British imperialism is stubborn and will in no case part with power and quit, unless over-powered, crushed, and driven out; that reactionary elements like the Princes, zamindars, capitalists and the communists will always be bolstered up if nationalism pursues the path of negotiation and conciliation; that a revolutionary condition exists in the country and all classes of people, workers, peasants, labourers and even Government servants are seething with discontent, and there is an urge in all of them to change the *status-quo*: that the movement has percolated to the armed forces and the police, and therefore, it is the most opportune moment to start movement with the new technique fully developed. The sponsors of the new technique, urge a revision of the present policy by the national leadership, and substitution of it by a new policy of resolute struggle and ultimate seizure of power by the people, first on a local and regional basis, and finally the federation of these free regional or provincial Governments into an all-India State. The seizure of power has to be brought about by organized assault by the people, aided by specially trained bands of *Azad Dastas* upon the machinery of imperialism. The destruction and liquidation of the existing bureaucratic structure and its substitution by a new system of Government based upon village civics (Gram Raj). It is assumed that a portion of the police and military serving the British Government will come over in the early stages and will provide armed support to the uprising of the people. Only a minority of incorrigible loyalists will have to be disarmed and suppressed. In any case it is argued the old forms of struggle, viz. *Satyagraha* (jail-going) has become obsolete and will enthuse none

in future. That, in a nut-shell, is the case for a new technique and new approach.

It has to be admitted that the basis for the adoption of a new technique is real.

## HIGH COMMAND

The Indian national movement has grown into a full-fledged people's movement during recent years. The Congress, today, is not a party but a majority movement. It has secured the loyalty and support not only of the down-trodden millions and the politically conscious middle class, but has caught the imagination of such stratas of Indian society as had hitherto formed the backbone of British rule. There is hardly any section of the people in India, today, which pins its faith in British bureaucracy—a dying and decadent system, counting its last days. If anybody in India has perceived this fundamental transformation it is the present leadership of the Congress, better known as the High Command or Gandhian leadership. This leadership is conscious of the invincible position it has secured, and confident of the support it will receive from the people in any emergency and conflict. The High Command today negotiates an armistice and a treaty of withdrawal from India with a diffident and decadent imperialism. It has already secured important successes and has succeeded in entrenching itself in the citadel of power, the power-house which controls the bureaucratic system spread over the entire country. The imperialist machine is showing definite signs of cracking, exhaustion and decay. What will be the final outcome? If, today, British Imperialism is showing willingness to part with power, it is because the system it represents is already out-worn and morally discredited. A new orientation has become imperative to suit its international obligations. The physical ruling of one people by another has become an out-moded proposition, and new forms of domination and exploitation have been evolved. Naturally, therefore, in India imperialism negotiates for a revision of relationship—at least a revision in the outward form,

## A SUBTLE DUEL

A subtle duel is thus going on between a crafty and experienced imperialism and the confident leadership of a mighty people, awakened from a long slumber. The out-

come of this duel is difficult to predict. Morally everything is on the side of the Indian leadership, but moral strength is not the last word in state-craft, which still depends in the final analysis upon physical force. It has therefore, to be admitted that imperialism, foiled in its subtle diplomacy and defeated in the moral battle, may yet take recourse to armed might and offer a deadly challenge to Nationalist India. In that case a bitter struggle will have to be fought and the question of a new technique and system of warfare arises. Has the High Command a plan of struggle if such a contingency arises or will it again go down and leave the people to face the crisis as they did in 1942? The question hinges on this straight issue and answer must come straight and clear and upon that answer rests the future of the present leadership

### GLAMOUR OF SECRET WORK

In 1942, when the country was left leaderless to face a ruthless reign of repression and terrorism, people retaliated by sabotage and dislocation and broke out in disorganised violence; instead of civil disobedience and jail-going a new cult of going underground was initiated by the then leadership. This new technique provided a fascinating alternative to the fossilised system of jail-going. The romance and adventure of going underground when sought by the imperialist police and military, the new opportunities of hurling a counter-challenge to a powerful foe, the frustration it caused them, the high prices and rewards announced by the imperialist power for the capture of patriotic under-ground workers, the hunts and searches, the glamour and thrill of running secret presses and wireless transmitters, the moral satisfaction of having fought a positive war, all these created an altogether new atmosphere, surcharged with emotion and replete with the thrill of a higher order than mere civil disobedience generated. Hundreds and thousands of young men and women participated in this life of adventure and romance. A whole people backed them in the hope that they would protect the honour and prestige of the country in the face of a savage attack by the relentless enemy. This is the story of the new technique. What did it achieve? Its own leaders admit its inefficiency. The fact that it failed in achieving the desired results provides ground for its refutation. I have deliberately avoided discussing the complications which this sort of secret activity created in the national life and the way in which it damaged the spontaneous growth of a

mass movement, because secrecy is suicidal to the growth of any mass movement.

According to the sponsors of the new technique, sabotage and dislocation have to be supplemented by a positive programme of forming the people's governing apparatus (Gram Raj) and the peoples defending apparatus (Azad Dasta). The old machinery of Government has to be destroyed and replaced by a people's *raj* and peoples army. Even according to them, underground movement can only be a passing phase. It cannot be the normal phase of people's revolution, which, to succeed, must rapidly transform itself into an openly functioning, healthy organ of administration. To assess the real potentialities of the new technique we must free ourselves of its romantic glamour, of its adventurous appeal, and of its charming ultra-idealism. Then it will become plain to us that it lacks many of the fundamentals of a people's movement and is naturally foredoomed to failure.

### HIGH COMMAND'S ANALYSIS

A people's movement can thrive only upon a positive programme of action and not upon a negative programme of sabotage and dislocation. Never in history has such a programme of negation succeeded. Destruction and sabotage often hinder rather than help a people's assault. The present leadership's contention is that if people have the requisite revolutionary zeal and wise guidance they can control and command the organs of transport, etc., and utilize them for revolutionary purposes, instead of destroying them. In a complex society, inter-dependent for the supply of vital goods, dislocation of communications proves disastrous to the people themselves. A small and properly armed group can command and requisition vital goods when necessary, even in a state of chaos, and, therefore, any programme of people's insurrection based upon sabotage and dislocation can at best be understood as an act of desperation and not an act of the positive assertion of the people's constructive will. It is mainly this outlook that has compelled the Congress High Command to disapprove of the programme of sabotage and dislocation.

### AND THEIR PROGRAMME

It does not necessarily follow that Congress High Command is not thinking in terms of positive action by the people. It has its own ways of talking about the

programme at proper times and its own perspective to assist events. It has confidence in its inherent national strength, and even in 1942 Mahatma Gandhi was cautiously evolving a positive programme through which the people could paralyse the imperialist machine and substitute it by one dependent upon their own organisation. Some of the leaders, in close touch with the Congress High Command have already supported a programme of national strike. If such a programme is adequately organised in advance, and has the support of various stratas of society (such as Railway and mine workers, police and other Government servants, army, Navy and Air Forces, a paralysis of the imperialist structure could be brought about without acts of sabotage (such as breach in a Railway track etc.). Such an orderly assault by the people, if successful, can be followed by positive programmes of assertion, such as, election of village *panchayats* and functional soviets (in which the working class and the peasantry can work together with the various sympathetic strata of middle-class society). Armed conflict may follow such an assertion by the people if a Provisional Government is set up and the people organise themselves in *jathas* of National Militia. In any case, it is evident that the limited programme sponsored by a small minority in a national movement can at best serve only as an emotional tonic. It cannot be substituted for a national programme of assertion which can be undertaken with the willing consent of the bulk of the population, and under a leadership in which a whole people have confidence.

### HIGH COMMAND'S ACHIEVEMENT

This brings us to the problem of alternate leadership. The substitution of one leadership by another arises only when the first is either discredited or openly goes over to the enemy. Has such an emergency arisen in our country today? Have the people lost faith in the present leadership? Only the blind would put forth such a claim. The Gandhian leadership, today, is at the zenith of its power and popularity. To its many triumphs has been added, the glorious achievement of converting the defeat of 1942-43 into a crowning victory, both physical and moral. In a period of war, parties which oppose the Government are relentlessly wiped out. Many had been our miscalculations during the crisis leading upto the 1942 revolutionary upsurge. The new technique employed by younger leaders

(under the emotional stress of a deep crisis, and in imitation of similar efforts in other lands) had complicated issues beyond the possibility of a compromise. A tradition of hate, bitterness and revenge had been generated which might have barred the way to conciliation. But a great leader knows no limitations. Gandhiji pulled the entire nation out of the inferno. Even those who had taken part in armed hostilities were brought out free and unscathed. The heroes of the Indian National Army, the brave soldiers of Satara, the victims of the Chimur and Ashti episodes, one and all were saved. "Not a hair of their head shall be touched", was the *mantra* that the Sage of Sevagram chanted. And he had his way. Can such a leader lose the people's confidence? Can such a leader be replaced? Those who talk loosely of an alternative leadership do not know their own mind. Let us presume that we have to fight yet another battle under Gandhiji's guidance, and under the leadership of the present High Command. Whether through negotiations or struggle the present High Command will lead us to ultimate victory. We can only give it our unflinching loyalty and unreserved co-operation.

## CHAPTER II

### 'QUIT INDIA'

#### 1—THE A.I.C.C. SESSION

The whole background was prepared and the country was excited and eager to know how the A.-I.C.C. would react to the Wardha resolution of the 'Congress Working Committee which is known as the "Quit India Resolution". Everybody knew that a struggle was ahead yet all were anxious to know the nature and character of the struggle that India would have to launch. Imagination was running high in India. The people were talking freely and discussing about the shape of things to come

"But what of that? Why should we pay for the war after all? India is not a party to it."

"That I know, but they have declared India a belligerent country without consulting our leaders and as such we are supposed to be at war with Germany and fighting for freedom and democracy.

"For freedom and democracy! this is unthinkable, ridiculous. Assuredly we are shedding our blood for Britain, and making contributions for the preservation of its ill-gotten gains. Perhaps you have heard about Bachhu Sur's prophecies. According to him 13th to 23rd August is the hardest time for the British. Their doom is almost certain".

"Yes, it seems so, but dependence on the stars is a folly. Win our freedom and wait for favourable stars. The Russians and Chinese are doing the same thing. Freedom's battle must be fought to the last ditch. This is a proper time."

"You are right. The Government is adamant. Our demands are not conceded. Freedom is not a gift. We have to secure it through the path of sacrifice. We may have to shed our blood and lose everything. The British spokesmen have given us a post-dated cheque. There were the Delhi talks and the Cripps' proposals. The British think that the Indians can be befooled. We want freedom, not a toy of clay."

"Exactly! there is every reason that Gandhiji has asked them to quit India. We are also sick of them. The sooner they leave the country, the better. If they do not, we shall drive them out."

"I know little of politics, but it is my full faith that Gandhiji has received some message from God. He has deep insight. He can look into the future. He promises to the nation that this struggle of ours would be the last battle for freedom. It must be true, because Gandhiji is to the British what Lord Krishna was to Kans."

"A novel programme is expected from Gandhiji this time. We hope to paralyse the entire Government machinery in no time. The Imperialist structure will fall like a house of cards. Trains, busses, telephones, etc., all shall cease to function."

"Perhaps you know that Congressmen are meeting at Bombay. Let us wait for their decision. This is a very important session of the Congress. We must gird our loins. If we do not fight now, we shall be caught in the flames."

"Gandhiji is to me more of a politician than a Mahatma. He knows that complete disaster awaits us, if we shirk fighting. Then, why not die a brave death. This is the only way we can conceive of fighting against the British and the Japanese—enemies of Indian freedom."

The atmosphere was full of tension and excitement. The reasons for such an atmosphere prevailing are simple. Why quit India, not with a bang but with a whimper? Even before the enemy had actually entered the soil of India, and long before the first bomb had fallen, a wave of blind panic swept over the country. From the coastal area there was a regular exodus of frightened people to the interior. There was actually a loss of nerve, because an emasculated people, who had for centuries lived in the hot-house of pax-Britannica, did not know how to face the enemy which had so cruelly overrun Malaya, Singapore and Burma. Such scenes of panic and confusion were witnessed in almost every country of the world at the first impact of the war, because the days of face to face war were long past. There was no question of belligerency or non-belligerency. Every citizen of an invaded country, irrespective of age and sex, was considered to be at war and was living under insecure and terrific circumstances. There was mass bombardment of unarmed and peaceful people in the interior. This gave universality to the war and made everybody anxious to save his or her life.

It was under the shadow of the expected invasion of the country by the Japs, and at a time when the whole atmosphere was surcharged with agitation against the British, that the A-I. C. C. assembled in Bombay on that fateful day of 8th August to give its final verdict on the "Quit India" Resolution. The British were asked to quit India as rulers, not only in accordance with the expressed will of the people to become free but also in the interests of the immediate safety of India and their lives. The session of the A-I. C. C. was expected to be epoch-making, and its decision to become a land-mark in the history of the world. It is no wonder, therefore, that the eyes of the world were anxiously focussed on this meeting. Every country had evinced a keen interest in the session because it was felt that with the fate of India to be determined by this session was inextricably linked the fate of many other nations, especially those in the far East. Besides the British and American correspondents, the representatives of the Chinese News Agency and Tass Agency of Russia were also present, and in all no less than 350 press passes were issued to press representatives, which included fifty foreigners. In external grandeur the session looked as magnificent as an Annual Session of the Congress but its importance was far greater, and the tempo of public enthusiasm for it far excelled that hitherto exhibited for any of the previous Congress Annual Sessions. The Congress House had become a virtual beehive humming with activity for about a week before the commencement of the session. An endless stream of visitors, guests and workers, besides the members of the A-I. C. C., flowed towards Bombay from all over the country. The officials, workers, volunteers and guides, male and female, were everywhere seen running about giving instructions and executing orders with an excitement and passion, unprecedented in scale. Thousands of people had to go back for failure to get passes and tickets for entry in the pandal. Long queues of intending purchasers were seen hanging about the booking windows. In many cases ten rupee tickets were sold by some individuals even for rupees one thousand. A huge *Pandal* had been specially constructed for the purpose in the Gwalia Tank Maidan at a cost of not less than one lakh of rupees. Every inch of the 35,000 square feet of the *Pandal* was filled with a surging mass of humanity and thousands or others stood outside the Maidan to listen to the grand parliament of the nation. Bombay, the queen of India, surpassed the gran-

deur of Rome of the Great Empire days. About 3,000 volunteers, including 800 *Desh Sevikas*, were given charge of making arrangements, maintaining control and discipline and attending to visitors and guests. They gave a new touch and a new life to the whole gathering. Nationalist streamers and Tricolour flags lent new glory and colour to the whole pageant. One incident that occurred just before the opening of the session, however, remains deeply engraved in my memory. It was the flight of an aeroplane over the Maidan just before the opening of the session. Was it intended to demonstrate British might, was it to warn the A-I. C. C. of the possible consequences of any unpleasant decision on its part, or was it a prelude to the machine-gunning that was to follow in Bihar and other provinces?

The session commenced at 2.30 p.m. with the singing of the National Anthem followed by that famous song of 'Bande Matram', and a chorus by a batch of students. As one watched these great figures in Indian politics sitting on the rostrum, these proved soldiers and stalwarts of Indian freedom who had risked everything for the love of their country and had again girded up their loins to plunge into a decisive battle against an empire, one felt over-awed, with one's heart filled with respect, reverence and deep affection for these people. As the Congress President, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, came forward on the dais sitting on a chair, on account of illness, and began addressing the assembly, one wondered if there could be a better soldier and a more anxious fighter to defend the motherland. He began his speech with a historical background of the Wardha Resolution, and the attitude of the Congress towards the war, and the efforts made by it to come to terms with the Muslim League. He regretted that these gestures were only one-sided, and that the Muslim League only gave cold-shoulder to the Congress. He made two speeches, one at the opening, and the other while winding up the proceedings of the session.

### THE RESOLUTION

The Quit India resolution was moved by Pt. Nehru, and seconded by Sardar Patel. While speaking in English on the resolution Pt. Nehru declared, "This resolution is not a threat. It is an invitation..... It is an explanation, it is an offer of cooperation. It is all that. But still, behind it, there is a clear indication that certain consequences will follow if certain events do not happen. It is an offer of cooperation of a Free India. On any other terms there

will be no cooperation. On any other terms, our resolution promises only conflict and struggle."

Pandit Nehru went on to say, that some of their friends abroad thought that they were acting unwisely. He was not saying that they were wrong. In their environment, they could not think otherwise. But, he declared, "We are indeed earnest. Let there be no mistake about it. We are on the verge of a precipice and we are in dead earnest about it."

Pandit Nehru declared that the resolution, when passed, would not only represent the decision of the A.-I. C. C., but the voice of the whole of India. He would even go a step further and say that it represented the voice of oppressed humanity throughout the world. If Britain accepted the resolution and acted according to its demands, they would see a change not only in India but all over the world. It would change the whole nature of the war. It would give it a real revolutionary background.

He pointed out that the essential thing about the war was that it was something infinitely more than a mere war. It was a world-war all right but greater than that. It was a prelude and a precursor of a vast revolution that was enveloping the whole world. The war might be carried on for some time more, but no peace would be established, no equilibrium attained until this revolution ran its appointed course.

It was a great misfortune that the leaders in the west had not realised, or if they realised, had not acted as if they had realised the revolutionary significance of this war. They were still carrying on this war on the old lines, and thought that they could win it only by building more ships and aeroplanes. They were not thinking in terms of a vast upsurge of the elemental emotions of humanity. Until they did that they could never attain success but would only go from failure to failure. He hoped that they would learn their lesson. He could only hope that they would not learn it too late.

Pandit Nehru further asserted that Mr. Churchill and other Britishers had not got over thinking in terms of the Anglo-Saxon race, and recalled the speech of Mr. Churchill visualizing the day when the Anglo-saxon would march through the world with dignity and majesty. He reminded the British and the Americans that there were other races

in the world besides the Anglo-Saxon race, and racial superiority would not be tolerated any more.

At the time then present, Pandit Nehru went on, the Allied cause was only negatively right, in the sense that Germany and Japan were enemies of civilised life but an act of Indian freedom would change the whole nature of the war and make it positively right. Even the people of Nazi Germany and those who were helping them would feel the impact of the change.

He regretted that people in England, America and elsewhere were looking at every question from the narrow, soldier's point of view, but it did not matter to them how other people viewed the Indian question. He could only tell them that they would not be deterred from their course by any amount of threats. On the other hand, they ought to realise that threats could only make the position infinitely worse and more difficult for them.

He made an earnest appeal to all people in India not to forget their high aims and objectives, reminding them that they were fighting not in the interests of India but in the interests of all countries of the world, including China and Russia. He was a nationalist and he was proud to be a nationalist, but they should not settle down to a narrow nationalism. They should develop the right type of internationalism, and not the pseudo-internationalism then current, or that of the League of Nations.

Pandit Nehru declared that they were going to face great difficulties in the days ahead. All that he could say to those Englishmen and Americans who considered that the Congress was not right was that it was for the Indian people to decide for themselves. They knew subjection much better than Englishmen or Americans.

After all, it was the Indians who would have to undergo enormous suffering and privations if there was a Japanese invasion of India. "We have entered the fire and we have now to come out of it successfully or be consumed by it," declared Pandit Nehru.

Regarding the problem of Hindu-Muslim unity, Pandit Nehru said that he had asked Mr. Jinnah as to what the League wanted. But the letter containing that enquiry still remained unanswered.

Mr. Jinnah's attitude was something which one could see only in Nazi Germany, Fascist Italy, or Sudetene

land. Yet the "Bombay Chronicle" was never tired of asking the Congress to come to a settlement with the League. Panditji wanted to know what the Editor of that paper meant by harping on that same subject day after day. He at times wondered what was coming over the people of Bombay and the newspapers of the city. Whatever that be, every time the Congress had approached the League for a settlement the door was banged on their face. They could not court such insults any longer.

The National War Front, said Panditji, was asking some questions through advertisements in newspapers. He was glad that some nationalist papers had refused to publish these advertisements. The Front was asking what the people were doing to stem Japanese aggression and help China. There was only one answer to this question; that is "we are endeavouring to remove British rule from our country. That is the best way to help the Chinese and the Russians."

### MAULANA AZAD EXPLAINS

Before putting the amendments and the main resolution to vote Maulana Abul Kalam Azad explained the various efforts made by him to bring about a communal settlement. Several attempts had been made by him during the preceding two years to arrive at a settlement. but they always proved to be one-sided efforts. The other side was not willing to come forward to discuss the question. Even during the Allahabad meeting of the A-I.C.C. he made it clear to Rajaji that the Congress was willing to discuss the question and was prepared to start negotiations.

Continuing, the Maulana stated that the position of the Congress was well-known. It had always kept the door for negotiations open. What was the use of asking the Congress to arrive at a settlement, when it was already prepared to do so and had always kept the door open for negotiations? What was required of those who were shouting for Hindu-Muslim settlement was not to shout at those who had kept the door open but to go and break their heads at the other door, which was not only shut, but bolted with nails driven into it, so that it might not open any time.

The Congress President then put the various amend-

ments to vote. Three amendments were withdrawn and the remaining were all rejected by an overwhelming majority—only twelve members voting in their favour.

The original resolution was then put to vote and was carried by an over-whelming majority, only thirteen members voting against it. The Congress President then declared the resolution passed amidst loud and continued cheers.

Mahatma Gandhi then addressed the House for 140 minutes in Hindustani and English.

## 2—*THE WORD*

‘I congratulate you on the resolution that you have just passed. I also congratulate the three comrades on the courage they have shown in pressing their amendments to a division, even though they knew that there was an overwhelming majority in favour of the resolution; and I congratulate the thirteen friends who voted against the resolution. In doing so they had nothing to be ashamed of. For the last twenty years we have tried to learn not to lose courage even when we are in a hopeless minority and are laughed at. We have learned to hold on to our beliefs in the confidence that we are in the right. It behoves to cultivate this courage of conviction, for it ennobles man and raises his moral stature. I was therefore glad to see that these friends had imbibed the principle which I have tried to follow for the last fifty years and more.

## HINDU-MUSLIM UNITY

“Having congratulated them on their courage, let me say that, what they asked this Committee to accept through their amendments was not a correct representation of the situation. These friends ought to have pondered over the appeal made to them by the Maulana to withdraw their amendments; they should have carefully followed the explanations given by Jawaharlal. Had they done so, it would have been clear to them that the right which they now want the Congress to concede has already been conceded by the Congress.

“Time was when every Mussalman claimed the whole of India as his motherland. During the years that the Ali Brothers were with me, the assumption underlying all their talks and discussions was that India belonged as much to the Mussalmans as to the Hindus. I can testify to the fact that this was their innermost

conviction and not a mask; I lived with them for years. I spent days and nights in their company. And I make bold to say that their utterances were the honest expression of their beliefs. I know there are some who say that I take things too readily at their face value, that I am gullible. I do not think I am such a simpleton nor am I so gullible as these friends take me to be. But their criticism does not hurt me. I should prefer to be considered gullible rather than deceitful.

### MY LIFE-LONG EFFORT

"What these Communist friends proposed through their amendments is nothing new. It has been repeated from thousands of platforms. Thousands of Mussalmans have told me, that if the Hindu-Muslim question was to be solved satisfactorily, it must be done in my lifetime. I should feel flattered at this; but how can I agree to a proposal which does not appeal to my reason? Hindu-Muslim unity is not a new thing. Millions of Hindus and Mussalmans have sought after it. I consciously strove for its achievement from my boyhood. While at school, I made it a point to cultivate the friendship of Muslim and Parsi co-students. I believed even at that tender age that the Hindus in India, if they wished to live in peace and amity with the other communities should assiduously cultivate the virtue of neighbourliness. It did not matter, I felt, if I made no special effort to cultivate the friendship with Hindus, but I must make friends with at least a few Mussalmans. It was as Counsel for a Mussalman merchant that I went to South Africa. I made friends with other Mussalmans there, even with the opponents of my client, and gained a reputation for integrity and good faith. I had among my friends and co-workers Muslims as well as Parsis. I captured their hearts and when I left finally for India, I left them sad and shedding tears of grief at the separation.

"In India too I continued my efforts and left no stone unturned to achieve that unity. It was my life-long aspiration for it that made me offer my fullest co-operation to the Mussalmans in the Khilafat movement. Muslims throughout the country accepted me as their true friend.

"How then is it that I have now come to be regarded as so evil and detestable? Had I any axe to grind in supporting the Khilafat movement? True, I did in my heart

of hearts cherish a hope that it might enable me to save the cow. I am a worshipper of the cow. I believe the cow and myself to be the creation of the same God, and I am prepared to sacrifice my life in order to save her. But, whatever my philosophy of life and my ultimate hopes, I joined the movement in no spirit of bargain. I co-operated in the struggle for the Khilafat solely in order to discharge my obligation to my neighbour who, I saw, was in distress. The Ali Brothers, had they been alive today would have testified to the truth of this assertion. And so would have Maulana Abdul Bari Saheb, Khwaja, Shweib and others would even today bear me out in that it was not a bargain on my part for saving the cow. As an honest man, a true neighbour and a faithful friend, it was incumbent on me to stand by the Mussalmans in the hour of their trial.

### THAT COURTESY AND DIGNITY

"In those days I shocked the Hindus by dining with the Mussalmans, though with the passage of time they have now got used to it. Maulana Bari told me, however, that though he would insist on having me as his guest he would not allow me to dine with him, lest some day he should be accused of a sinister motive. And so, whenever I had occasion to stay with him, he called a Brahmin cook and made special arrangements for separate cooking. Firangi Mahal, his residence, was an old-styled structure with limited accommodation; yet he cheerfully bore all hardships and carried out his resolve from which I could not dislodge him. It was the spirit of courtesy, dignity and nobility that inspired us in those days. Members of each community vied with one another in accommodating members of sister communities. They respected one another's religious feelings, and considered it a privilege to do so. Not a trace of suspicion lurked in anybody's heart. Where has all that dignity-that nobility of Spirit-disappeared now? I should ask all Mussalmans, including the Qaid-e-Azam to recall those glorious days and to find out what has brought us to the present impasse. The Qaid-e-Azam himself was at one time a Congressman. If today the Congress has incurred his wrath, it is because the canker of suspicion has entered his heart. May God bless him with long life, but when I am gone he will realise and admit that I had no designs on the Mussalmans and that I had never betrayed their interests. Where is the escape for me if I injure their interests? My life is entirely

at their disposal. They are free to put an end to it whenever they wish to do so. Assaults have been made on my life in the past, but God has spared me till now, and the assailants have repented for their action. But if someone were to shoot me in the belief that he was getting rid of a rascal, he would kill not the real Gandhi, but the one that appeared to him a rascal.

### DESIST FROM VILIFICATION

"To those who have been indulging in a campaign of abuse and vilification I would say, 'Islam enjoins on you not to revile even an enemy. The Prophet treated even enemies with kindness and tried to win them over by his fairness and generosity. Are you followers of that Islam or of any other? If you are followers of the true Islam, does it behove you to distrust the words of one who makes a public declaration of his faith? You may take it from me that one day you will regret the fact that you distrusted a friend of yours. It cuts me to the quick to see that the more I appeal, the more the Maulana importunes, the more intense does the campaign of vilification grow. To me the abuses are like bullets. They can kill me, even as a bullet can put an end to my life. You may kill me. That will not hurt me. But what of those who indulge in abusing? They bring discredit to Islam. For the fair name of Islam, I appeal to you to resist this unceasing campaign of abuse and vilification.

"The Maulana Saheb is being made a target for the filthiest abuse. Why? Because he refuses to exert on me the pressure of his friendship. He realises that it is a misuse of friendship to seek to compel a friend to accept as truth what he knows is an untruth.

### TO THE QAID-E-AZAM

"To the Qaid-e-Azam I would say 'Whatever is true and valid in the claim for Pakistan is already in your hands. What is wrong and untenable is in nobody's gift so that it can be made over to you. Even if someone were to succeed in imposing an untruth on others, he would not be able to enjoy for long the fruits of such a coercion. God dislikes pride and keeps away from it. God would not tolerate a forcible imposition of an untruth.'

"The Qaid-e-Azam says that he is compelled to say

bitter things, but that he cannot help giving expression to his thoughts and feelings. Similary I would say: I consider myself a friend of the Mussalmans. Why should I then not give expression to the things nearest to my heart, even at the cost of displeasing them? How can I conceal my innermost thoughts from them? I should congratulate the Qaid-e-Azam on his frankness in giving expression to his thoughts and feelings even if they sound bitter to his hearers. But even so why should the Mussalmans sitting here be reviled if they do not see eye to eye with him? If millions of Mussalmans are with you, can you not afford to ignore the handful of Mussalmans who may appear to you to be misguided? Why should one with the following of several millions be afraid of a majority community, or of the minority being swamped by the majority? How did the Prophet work among the Arabs and Mussalmans? How did he propagate Islam? Did he say he would propagate Islam only when he commanded a majority? I therefore appeal to you for the sake of Islam to ponder over what I say. There is neither fairplay nor justice in saying that the Congress must accept a thing even if it does not believe in it and even if it goes counter to principles it holds dear.

### NOT MY METHOD

"Rajaji said to me: I do not believe in Pakistan. But the Mussalmans ask for it, Mr. Jinnah asks for it, and it has become an obsession with them. Why not then say 'yes' to them just now? The same Mr. Jinnah will later on realise the disadvantages of Pakistan and will forgo the demand. I said it is not fair to accept as true a thing which I hold to be untrue, and ask others to do so in the belief that the demand will not be pressed when the time comes for settling it finally. If I hold the demand to be just I should concede it this very day. I should not agree to it merely in order to placate Jinnah Sahab. Many friends have come and asked me to agree to it for the time being to placate Mr. Jinnah and disarm his suspicions and to see how he reacts to it. But I cannot be party to a course of action with a false promise. At any rate it is not my method.

### DEMOCRACY AND NON-VIOLENCE

"The Congress has no sanction but the moral one for

enforcing its decisions. It believes that true democracy can only be the outcome of non-violence. The structure of a world federation can be raised only on a foundation of non-violence, and violence will have to be totally abjured from world affairs. If this is true, the solution of the Hindu-Muslim question, too, cannot be achieved by a resort to violence. If the Hindus tyrannise over the Mussalmans, with what face will they talk of a world federation? It is for the same reason that I do not believe in the possibility of establishing world peace through violence as the English and American statesmen propose to do. The Congress has agreed to submitting all differences to an impartial international tribunal and to abide by its decisions. If even this fairest of proposals are unacceptable, the only course that remains open is that of the sword, of violence. How can I persuade myself to agree to an impossibility? To demand the vivisection of a living organism is to ask for its very life. It is a call to war. The Congress cannot be party to such a fratricidal war. Those Hindus who, like Dr. Moonje and Shri Savarkar, believe in the doctrine of the sword may seek to keep the Mussalmans under Hindu domination. I do not represent that section. I represent the Congress. You want to kill the Congress which is the goose that lays golden eggs. If you distrust the Congress, you may rest assured that there is to be perpetual war between the Hindus and the Mussalmans, and the country will be doomed to continued warfare and bloodshed. If such warfare is to be our lot, I shall not live to witness it.

"It is for that reason that I say to Jinnah saheb 'You may take it from me that whatever in your demand for Pakistan accords with considerations of justice and equity is lying in your pocket; whatever in the demand is contrary to justice and equity you can take only by the sword and in no other manner'.

### UNITE IN FIGHT FOR FREEDOM

"There is much in my heart that I would like to pour out before this assembly. One thing which was uppermost in my heart I have already dealt with. You may take it from me that it is with me a matter of life and death. If we Hindus and Muslims mean to achieve a heart unity, without the slightest mental reservation on the part of either, we must first unite in the effort to be free from the shackles of this Empire. If Pakistan after all is to be

a portion of India, what objection can there be for Muslims against joining this struggle for India's freedom? The Hindus and Mussalmans must, therefore, unite in the first instance on the issue of fighting for freedom. Jinnah Sahab thinks the war will last long. I do not agree with him. If the war goes on for six months more, how shall we be able to save China?

### FREEDOM CANNOT WAIT

"I therefore want freedom immediately, this very night, before dawn, if it can be had. Freedom cannot now wait for the realisation of communal unity. If that unity is not achieved, sacrifices necessary for it will have to be much greater than would have otherwise sufficed. But the Congress must win freedom or be wiped out in the effort. And forget not that the freedom which the Congress is struggling to achieve will not be for the congressmen alone but for all the forty crores of the Indian people. Congressmen must forever remain humble servants of the people.

### DOMINATION VS. DEMOCRACY

"The Qaid-e-Azam has said that the Muslim League is prepared to take over the rule from the Britishers if they are prepared to hand it over to the League, for the British took over the empire from the hands of the Muslims. This, however, will be Muslim Raj. The offer made by Maulana Sahab and by me does not imply the establishment of Muslim Raj or Muslim domination. The Congress does not believe in the domination of any group or community. It believes in democracy which includes in its orbit Muslims, Hindus, Christians, Parsis, Jews,—every one of the communities inhabiting this vast country. If Muslim raj is inevitable, then let it be; but how can we give it the stamp of our assent? How can we agree to the domination of one community over the others?

### INDIA THE HOMELAND OF ALL

"Millions of Mussalmans in this country come from Hindu stock. How can their homeland be any other than India? My eldest son embraced Islam some years back. What would his homeland be,—Porbunder or the Punjab? I ask the Mussalmans. "If India is not your homeland,

to what other country do you belong to? In what separate homeland would you put my son who embraced Islam?' His mother wrote him a letter after his conversion asking him if he had on embracing Islam given up drinking which Islam forbids to its followers. To those who gloated over the conversion she wrote to say: 'I do not mind his becoming a Mussalman so much as his drinking. Will you, as pious Mussalmans, tolerate his drinking even after his conversion? He has reduced himself to the state of a rake by drinking. If you are going to make a man of him again, his conversion will have been turned to good account. You will therefore please see that he as a Mussalman abjures wine and woman. If that change does not come about, his conversion goes in vain and our non-cooperation with him will have to continue.'

"India is without doubt the homeland of all the Mussalmans inhabiting this country. Every Mussalman should therefore co-operate in the fight for India's freedom. The Congress does not belong to any one class or community; it belongs to the whole nation. It is open to the Mussalmans to take possession of the Congress. They can, if they like, swamp the Congress by their numbers, and can steer it along the course which appeals to them. The Congress is fighting not on behalf of the Hindus but on behalf of the whole nation, including the minorities. It would hurt me to hear of a single instance of a Mussalman being killed by a Congressman. In the coming revolution Congressmen will sacrifice their lives in order to protect the Mussalman against a Hindu's attack and *vice versa*. It is a part of their creed, and is one of the essentials of non-violence. You will be expected on occasions like these not to lose your heads. Every congressman whether a Hindu or a Mussalman, owes this duty to the organisation to which he belongs. The Mussalman who will act in this manner will render a service to Islam. Mutual trust is essential for success in the final nation-wide struggle that is to come.

"I have said that much greater sacrifices will have to be made this time in the wake of our struggle because of the opposition from the Muslim League and from Englishmen. You have seen the secret circular issued by Sir Fredric Puckle. It is a suicidal course that he has taken. It contains an open incitement to organisations which crop up like mushrooms to combine to fight the Congress. We have thus to deal with an Empire whose ways are crooked.

Ours is a straight path which we can tread even with our eyes closed. That is the beauty of Satyagraha.

### I CAN'T SIT SILENT

"In Satyagraha there is no place for fraud or falsehood, or any kind of untruth. Fraud and untruth to-day are stalking the world. I cannot be a helpless witness to such a situation. I have travelled all over India as perhaps nobody in the present age has. The voiceless millions of the land saw in me their friend and representative, and I identified myself with them to an extent it was possible for a human being to do. I saw trust in their eyes, which I now want to turn to good account in fighting this Empire upheld on untruth and violence. However gigantic the preparations that Empire has made, we must get out of its clutches. How can I remain silent at this supreme hour and hide my light under the bushel? Shall I ask the Japanese to tarry a while? If today I sit quiet and inactive, God will take me to task for not using up the treasure. He had given me, in the midst of the conflagration that is enveloping the whole world. Had it not been so, I should have asked you to wait a little longer, as I asked you to wait all these years. But the situation now has become intolerable, and the Congress has no other course left for it.

### FOR THE INTERVAL

"Nevertheless the actual struggle does not commence this moment. You have only placed all your powers in my hands. I will now wait upon the Viceroy and plead with him for the acceptance of the Congress demand. That process is likely to take two or three weeks. What would you do in the meanwhile? What is the programme, for the interval, in which all can participate? As you know the spinning wheel is the first thing that occurs to me. I made the same answer to the Maulana in reply to his question. He would have none of it, though he understood its import later. The fourteen-fold constructive programme is of course there for you to carry out. What more should you do? I will tell you. Every one of you should, from this moment onwards, consider yourself a free man or woman, and act as if you are free and are no longer under the heel of this Imperialism.

"It is not a make-believe that I am suggesting to you. It

is the very essence of freedom. The bond of the slave is snapped the moment he considers himself to be a free being. He will plainly tell the master; "I was your bond slave till this moment, but I am a slave no longer. You may kill me if you like but if you keep me alive, I wish to tell you; if you release me from the bondage, of your own accord, I will ask for nothing more from you. You used to feed and clothe me though I could have provided food and clothing for myself by my labour. I hitherto depended on you instead of on God, for food and raiment. But God has now inspired me with an urge for freedom and I am to-day a free man, and will no longer depend on you".

"You may take it from me that I am not going to strike a bargain with the Viceroy for ministries and the like. I am not going to be satisfied with anything short of complete freedom. May be he will propose the abolition of salt-tax, the drink evil, etc. But I will say 'Nothing less than Freedom.'

### DO OR DIE

"Here is a Mantra, a short one, that I give you. You may imprint it on your hearts and let every breath of yours give expression to it. The Mantra is: We shall 'Do or Die.' We shall either free India, or die in the attempt; we shall not live to see the perpetration of our slavery. Every true Congressman or woman will join the struggle with an inflexible determination not to remain alive to see the country in bondage and slavery. Let that be your pledge. Keep jails out of your consideration. If the Government keeps me free, I will spare you the trouble of filling the jails. I will not put on the Government the strain of maintaining a large number of prisoners at a time when it is in trouble. Let every man and woman live every moment of his or her life hereafter in the consciousness that he or she eats or lives for achieving freedom and will die, if need be, to attain that goal. Take a pledge, with God that you will no longer rest till freedom is achieved and will be prepared to lay down your lives in the attempt to achieve it. He who loses his life will gain it; he who will seek to save it shall lose it. Freedom is not for the coward or the faint-hearted.

### TO THE JOURNALISTS

"A word to the journalists. I congratulate you on

the support you have hitherto given to the national demand, I know the restrictions and handicaps under which you have to labour. But I would now ask you to snap the chains that bind you. It should be the proud privilege of the newspapers to lead and set an example in laying down one's life for freedom. You have the pen which the Government cannot suppress. I know you have large properties in the form of printing presses etc., and you would be afraid lest the Government should attach them. I do not ask you to invite an attachment of the printing press voluntarily. For myself I would not suppress my pen, even if the press was to be attached. As you know my press was attached in the past and returned later on. But I do not ask from you that final sacrifice. I suggest a middle way. You should now wind up your Standing Committee, and you may declare that you will give up writing under the present restrictions and take up the pen only when India has won her freedom. You may tell Sir Fredric Puckle that he cannot expect from you a command-performance, that his press-notes are full of untruth, and that you will refuse to publish them. And you will openly declare that you are whole-heartedly with the Congress. If you do this, you will have changed the atmosphere before the fight actually begins.

### TO THE PRINCES

"From the Princes I ask with all respect due to them a very small thing. I am a well-wisher of the Princes. I was born in a State. My Father was Prime Minister in three States. He once refused to salute anyone except his own prince. But he did not say to the prince, as I feel he ought to have said, that he could not compel him, his minister, to act against his conscience. I have eaten the Princes' salt, and I would not be false to it. As a faithful servant it is my duty to warn them that if they will act while I am still alive, they may come to occupy an honourable place in Free India. In Jawaharlal's scheme of Free India no privileges or the privileged classes have a place. Jawaharlal considers all property to be state-owned. He wants planned economy. He wants to reconstruct India according to plan. He likes to fly; I don't. I have kept a place for the Princes and the Zamindars in India that I envisage. I would ask the princes in all humility to enjoy through renunciation. They may renounce ownership over their properties and become their trustees in the true

sense of the term. I visualise God in the assemblage of people. The Princes may say to their people: 'You are the owners and masters of the States and we are your servants.' I would ask the Princes to become servants of the people and render to them an account of their own services. The Empire too can bestow power on the Princes but they should prefer to derive power from their own people; and if they want to indulge in some innocent pleasures, they may seek to do so as servants of the people. I do not want the Princes to live as paupers. But I would ask them: 'Do you want to remain slaves for all time?' Why should you, instead of paying homage to a foreign power, not accept the sovereignty of your own people. You may write to the Political Department: 'The people are now awake. How are we to withstand an avalanche before which even large empires are crumbling? We shall therefore belong to the people from today onwards. We shall sink or swim with them.' Believe me, there is nothing unconstitutional in the course I am suggesting. There are so far as I know, no treaties enabling the Empire to coerce the Princes. The peoples of the States will also declare that, though they are the Princes' subjects they are part of the Indian nation and that they will accept the leadership of the Princes if the latter cast their lot with the people, but not otherwise. If this declaration enrages the Princes and they choose to kill the people, the latter will meet death bravely and unflinchingly, but will not retract their words.

### SECRECY A SIN

"Nothing, however, should be done secretly. This is an open rebellion. In this struggle secrecy is a sin. A free man would not engage in a secret movement. It is likely that when you gain freedom you will have a C.I.D. of your own, in spite of my advice to the contrary. But in the present struggle we have to work openly and to receive bullets on our chest, without taking to heels. In a struggle of this character all secrecy is sin and must be punctiliously avoided.

### TO GOVERNMENT SERVANTS

"I have a word to say to Government servants also. They may not, if they like, resign their posts yet. The late Justice Ranade did not resign his post but he openly declared that he belonged to the Congress. He said to the Govern-

ment that though he was a Judge he was a Congressman and would openly attend the sessions of the Congress, but that at the same time he would not let his political views warp his impartiality on the bench. He held the Social Reform Conference in the very *pandal* of the Congress. I would ask all Government servants to follow in the footsteps of Ranade and declare their allegiance to the Congress as an answer to the secret circular issued by Sir Fredric Puckle.

"This is all that I ask of you just now. I will now write to the Viceroy. You will be able to read the correspondence not just now but when I publish it with the Viceroy's consent. But you are free to aver that you support the demand to be put forth in my letter. A judge came to me and said: 'We get secret circulars from high quarters. What are we to do?' I said, 'If I were in your place, I would ignore the circulars. You may openly say to the Government: 'I have received your secret circular. I am, however, with the Congress. Though I serve the Government for my livelihood, I am not going to obey these secret circulars or to employ underhand methods.'

### TO SOLDIERS

"Soldiers too are covered by the present programme. I do not ask them just now to resign their posts and leave the army. Soldiers! come to me, to Jawaharlal and to the Maulana and say: 'We are wholly with you. We are tired of the Governmental tyranny.' To these soldiers I would say. You may say to the Government, 'Our hearts are with the Congress. We are not going to leave our posts. We will serve you so long as we receive your salaries. We will obey your just orders but will refuse to fire on our own people.'

"To those who lack the courage to do this much I have nothing to say. They will go their own way. But if you can do this much, you may take it from me that the whole atmosphere will be electrified. Let the Government then shower bombs if they like. But no power on earth will then be able to keep you in bondage any longer.

### TO STUDENTS

"If the students want to join the struggle only to go back to their studies after a while, I would not

invite them to it. For the present, however, till the time that I frame a programme for the struggle, I would ask the students to say to their professors: 'We belong to the Congress. Do you belong to the Congress, or to the Government? If you belong to the Congress, you need not vacate your posts. You will remain at your posts but teach us and lead us unto Freedom.' In all fights for freedom the world over, students have made very large contributions.

"If in the interval that is left to us before the actual fight begins, you do even the little I have suggested to you, you will have changed the atmosphere and will have prepared the ground for the next step.

### THANKS

"There is much I should yet like to say. But my heart is heavy. I have already taken up much of your time. I have yet to say a few words in English also. I thank you for the patience and attention with which you have listened to me even at this late hour. It is just what true soldiers would do. For the last twenty-two years I have controlled my speech and pen, and have stored up my energy. He is a true *brahmachari* who does not fritter away his energy. He will therefore always control his speech. That has been my conscious effort all these years. But today the occasion has come when I had to unburden my heart before you. I have done so even though it meant putting a strain on your patience; and I do not regret having done it, I have given you my message and through you I have delivered it to the whole of India."

[*Thereafter Mahatma Gandhi spoke in English as follows:*]

### A HUMBLE SERVANT

"I have taken such an inordinately long time over pouring out what was agitating my soul to those whom I had just now the privilege of serving. I have been called their leader or, in military language, their commander. But I do not look at my position in that light. I have no weapon but love to wield my authority over anyone. I do sport a stick which you can break into bits without the slightest exertion. It is simply my staff with the help of which I walk. Such a cripple is not elated when he is called upon to bear the greatest burden. You can share

that burden only when I appear before you not as your commander but as a humble servant. And he who serves best is the chief among equals.

"Therefore I was bound to share with you such thoughts as were swelling up in my breast and tell you in as summary a manner as I can what I expect you to do as the first step.

## THE STRUGGLE DOES NOT COMMENCE TODAY

"Let me tell you at the outset that the real struggle does not commence today. I have yet to go through much ceremonial as I always do. The burden is almost unbearable and I have got to continue to reason in those cricles with whom I have lost my credit for the time being. I know that in the course of the last few weeks I have forfeited my credit with a large number of friends so much so that some of them have now begun to doubt not only my wisdom but even my honesty. Now, I hold that my wisdom is not such a treasure which I cannot afford to lose; but my honesty is a precious treasure to me and I can ill afford to lose it.

## LORD LINLITHGOW

"Such occasions arise in the life of a man who is a pure seeker after truth and who would seek to serve humanity and his country to the best of his lights without fear or hypocrisy. For the last 50 years I have known no other way. I have been a humble servant of humanity and have rendered on more than one occasion such service as I could to the Empire; and here let me say without fear of challenge that throughout my career never have I asked for any personal favour. I have enjoyed the privilege of friendship, as I enjoy it to-day, with Lord Linlithgow. It is a friendship which has outgrown official relationship. Whether Lord Linlithgow will bear me out I do not know; but there has sprung up a personal bond between him and myself. He once introduced me to his daughter. His son-in-law, the A.D.C. was drawn towards me. He fell in love with Mahadev more than with me, and Lady Anne and he came to me. She is an obedient and favourite daughter. I take interest in their welfare. I take the liberty to give out these tit-bits only to give you an earnest view of the personal bond which exists between us. And yet let me declare here that no personal bond will ever interfere with the stubborn struggle

which, if it falls to my lot, I may have to launch against Lord Linlithgow, as the representative of the Empire. It seems to me I will have to resist the might of that Empire with the might of the dumb millions, with no limit but non-violence as policy confined to this struggle. It is a terrible job to have to offer resistance to a Viceroy with whom I enjoy such relations. He has more than once trusted my word, often about my people. I mention this with great pride and pleasure. I mention it as an earnest of my desire to be true to the British nation, to be true to the Empire. I mention it to testify that when that Empire forfeited my trust, the Englishman who was its Viceroy came to know it.

### CHARLIE ANDREWS' MEMORY

"Then there is the sacred memory of Charlie Andrews which wells up within me at this moment. The spirit of Andrews hovers about me. For me he sums up the brightest tradition of English culture. I enjoyed closer relations with him than with most Indians. I enjoyed his confidence. There were no secrets between us. We exchanged our hearts everyday. Whatever was in his heart he would blur out without the slightest hesitation or reservation. It is true he was a friend of Gurudev with awe, not that Gurudev wanted it. Andrews had that peculiar humility. But with me he became the closest friend. Years ago he came with a note of introduction from Gokhale. Pearson and he are both unfortunately gone. They were the finest specimens of Englishmen. I know that spirit of Andrews is listening to me.

### METROPOLITAN'S BLESSINGS

"Then I have got a warm telegram from the Metropolitan of Calcutta conveying his blessings, though, I know, he is opposed to my move to-day. I hold him to be a man of God. I can understand the language of his heart and I know that his heart is with me.

### VOICE OF CONSCIENCE

"With this background, I want to declare to the world that, whatever may be said to the contrary, and although I might have forfeited the regard and even the trust of many friends in the West, and I bow my head low, but even for their friendship or their love, I

must not suppress the voice within, call it 'conscience', call it the 'prompting of my inner basic nature.' There is something within me impelling me to cry out my agony. I have known humanity. I have studied something of psychology though I have not read many books on it. Such a man knows exactly what it is. That something in me which never deceives me tells me now, 'You have to stand against the whole world although you may have to stand alone. You have to stare the world in the face although the world may look at you with bloodshot eyes. Do not fear. Trust that little thing which resides in the heart.' It says, 'Forsake friends, wife, all; but testify to that for which you have lived, and for which you have to die.'

### I WANT TO LIVE

"Believe me, friends, I am not anxious to die. I want to live my full span of life. According to me, it is 120 years at least. By that time India will be free, the world will be free. Let me tell you too, that I do not regard England, or for that matter America, as free countries. They are free after their own fashion, free to hold in bondage coloured races of the earth. Are England and America fighting for the liberty of these races to-day? You shall not limit my concept of freedom. The English and American teachers, their history, their magnificent poetry have not said you shall not broaden the interpretation of freedom. And according to my interpretation of that freedom, I am constrained to say they are strangers to that freedom which their poets and teachers have described. If they will know the real freedom, they should come to India. They have to come not with pride or arrogance but in the spirit of real earnest seekers of Truth.

### CONGRESS BACKGROUND

"It is a fundamental truth which India has been experimenting for 22 years. Unconsciously from its very foundations long ago the Congress has been building on non-violence known as constitutional method. Dadabhoj and Pherozshah who held the Congress India in the palm of their hands became rebels. They were lovers of the Congress. They were its masters. But above all they were real servants. They never countenanced

murder, secrecy and the like. I confess there are many black sheep amongst us congressmen. But I trust the whole of India to-day to launch upon a non-violent struggle. I trust because of my nature to rely upon the innate goodness of human nature which perceives the truth and prevails during the crisis as if by instinct. But even if I am deceived in this, I shall not swerve. I shall not flinch. From its very inception the Congress based its policy on peaceful methods, including *swaraj* and the subsequent generations added non-violence. When Dadabhoy entered the British Parliament, Salisbury dubbed him as a blackman, but the English people defeated Salisbury, and Dadabhoy, went to Parliament by their vote. India was delirious with joy. These things, however, now India has outgrown.

### IS IT A CRIME ?

"It is with all these things as the background that I want Englishmen, Europeans and all the United Nations to examine in their heart of hearts what crime India has committed in demanding Independence today. I ask: Is it right for you to distrust us? Is it right to distrust such an organisation with all its background, tradition and record of over half a century and misrepresent its endeavours before all the world by every means at your command? Is it right, I ask, that by hook or by crook, aided by the Foreign Press, aided, I hope not, by the President of the U.S.A. or even by the Generalissimo of China, who has yet to win his laurels, you should present India's struggle in shocking lights ?

### THE GENERALISSIMO

"I have met the Generalissimo. I have known him through Madam Chiang who was my interpreter, and though he seemed inscrutable to me, not so Madam Chiang. And he allowed me to read his mind through her. He has not as yet said that we were wrong in demanding our independence. There is a chorus of disapproval and protest all over the world against us. They say we are erring, the move is inopportune. I had great regard for the British, but now British diplomacy stinks into my nostrils. Yet others are learning their lessons. They may succeed in getting, through these methods, world opinion on their side for a time; but

India will raise her voice against all the organised propaganda. I will speak against it. Even if the whole of the world forsakes me, I will say: 'You are wrong. India will wrench with Non-violence her liberty from unwilling hands.'

### EVEN IF MY EYES CLOSE

"Even if my eyes close and there is no freedom for India, non-violence will not end. They will be dealing a mortal blow to China and to Russia if they oppose the freedom of non-violent India which to-day is pleading with bended knees for the fulfilment of a debt long overdue. Does a creditor ever go to the debtor like that? And even when India is met with such angry opposition, she says: 'We won't hit below the belt. We have learnt sufficient gentlemanliness. We are pledged to non-violence'. I have been the author of the non-embarrassment policy of the Congress and yet to-day you find me talking this strong language. My non-embarrassment plea was always qualified by the proviso 'consistent with our honour and safety.' If a man holds me by the neck and wants to drown me, may I not struggle to free myself directly? There is no inconsistency in our position to-day.

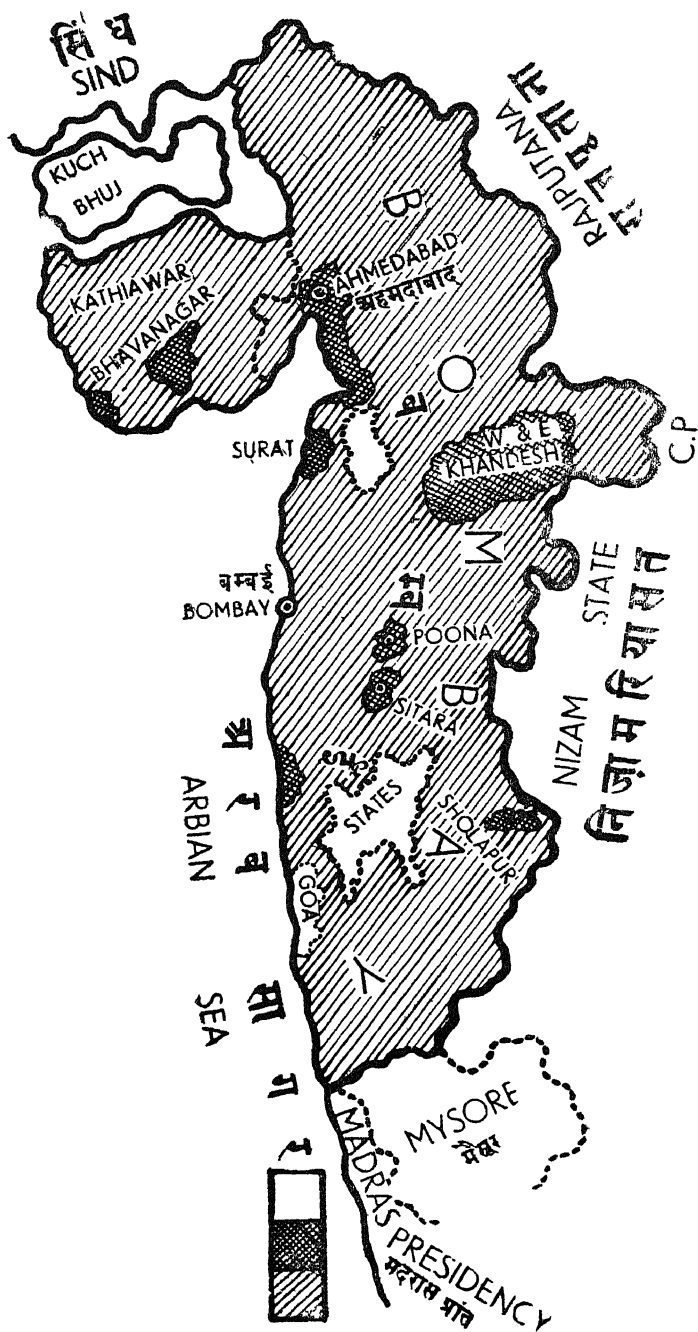
### APPEAL TO FOREIGN PRESS

"There are representatives of the Foreign Press assembled here to-day. Through them I wish to say to the world that United Nations, who say that they have need for India, have the opportunity now to declare India free and prove their *bona fides*. If they miss it, they will be missing the opportunity of their lifetime, and history will record that they did not discharge their obligations to India in time and lost battle. I want the blessings of the whole world so that I may succeed with them. I do not want the United Powers to go beyond their obvious limitations. I do not want them to accept non-violence and disarm to-day. There is a fundamental difference between Fascism and even this Imperialism which I am fighting. Do the British get from India all they want? What they get to-day is from the India which they hold in bondage. Think what difference it would make if India was to participate as a free ally. That freedom, if it is to come, must come to-day. It will have no taste left in it, if to-day you, who have power to help do not exercise it.

If you can exercise it, what seems impossible to-day will, under the glow of freedom, become possible to-morrow. If India feels that freedom, she will command that freedom for China. The road for running to Russia's help will be opened. The Englishman did not die in Malaya or on the soil of Burma. What shall enable us to retrieve this situation? Where shall I go and where shall I take the forty crores of India? How is this vast mass of humanity to be aflame in the cause of world-deliverance, unless and until it has touched and felt freedom? Today they have no touch of life left. It has been crushed out of them. If lustre is to be put into their eyes, freedom has to come not tomorrow but to-day. I have therefore pledged the Congress and the Congress has pledged herself that she will do or die."

## PART II

### *THE PROVINCIAL SURVEY*



मध्य प्रांत

निजाम रियासत

C.P.

## CHAPTER III

### BOMBAY

An earnest attempt has been made in the following pages to give an idea, however sketchy, of the extent and tempo of the movement as witnessed in the different Provinces and States of India.

To begin with I have chosen Bombay, where the historic and momentous All-India Congress Committee's session was held, from where the national and beloved leaders were snatched away from the nation ; and where the British bureaucracy fired its first shot on the forces of freedom and on the irritated masses, particularly the lady volunteers, who had assembled at the Gowalia Maidan. Bombay, one of the chief Cities of India, stands on an island connected with the ports by a causeway, and has a magnificent harbour and docks. It is rapidly surpassing Calcutta in trade and has the greatest of sea ports in India. Its position promises to make it the most important commercial centre in the East as it already is in the cotton trade of the world. It swarms with people of every kind, its commerce being mainly in the hands of the enlightened Parsis. These Parsis have glorious tradition and have always been in the vanguard of national independence. They have always kept the candle of freedom burning in the Bombay City, though they form a microscopic minority in India. They are the descendants of ancient fire-worshippers and, as such, they are full of fire and enthusiasm for freedom and justice. It is because of these people that Bombay has always been in the forefront whenever struggles for Indian freedom have been launched. It is the most westernised town in India and a very cosmopolitan one. It is grand and majestic, neat and clean, and has always been a leader in almost all social and political activities. It is the centre of learning arts, science, trade and commerce. Most of India's industrial magnates live in the City and are very much under the influence of Mahatma Gandhi and the Congress. They have always financed India's national movements, in a way they have been the exchequer of Nationalist India. The labourers of the City and Bombay

Province who have been well-organised by the efforts of Mahatma Gandhi and the Congress and their own Trade Unions are politically conscious and have always formed a strong battalion of the army of liberation wherever the Congress has fought its battles for liberty. The prosperity of the Bombay City began when the Civil War in America afforded it a lucrative market for its cotton. Its population is 11,61,000.

## THE BOMBAY PRESIDENCY

This is the Western Presidency of India and embraces 26 British districts and 19 Indian States. North of the Narbada river, the country is flat and fertile. South of it are mountain ranges and table-lands. In the fertile north, cotton, opium and wheat are staple products. In the south, iron and coal are mined, but coal is wanting. It keeps this province bound to the coal mines of Bihar. The climate is hot and moist near the coast and in the plains but very pleasant in the plateau. The breezy climate of the province draws to it a number of visitors from all over India and offers good health resorts. The natural beauty of the province and its healthy climate has made it the meeting ground of many races and cultures, and, as a result, a very enlightened and awakened part of India. Cotton manufacture has developed extensively and cotton clothes with sugar, tea, wool and drugs are exported.

The area of the Presidency is about 77,221 sq. miles. Population is 1 crore 80 lacs.

Bombay Presidency in general and Bombay City in particular have been made for the Congress. Here the nationalist forces are very strong, and nationalist ideas and feelings very deep-seated in the hearts of the people. When the foreign ruler made an assault on the nation on 9th August and the people were horrified, exasperated and bitter, Bombay gave a splendid retaliation to the Imperialist Britain. It was Bombay which supplied direction, guidance, means and trained cadets to prosecute the struggle. Bombay, in a way, was the brain trust of the nation and also the recruiting ground of freedom's soldiers.

### 1—BOMBAY CITY

9th AUGUST '42

The 9th August was a unique day in the history of Bombay. The sky was overcast with clouds on the night of 8th of August, and a storm was expected at any time.

The storm did come, but it was a political one, and swept away thousands of people of Bombay city and the province. For a brief spell Bombay was stunned by the news of the arrest of Gandhiji and members of the Congress Working Committee. But by 8 o' clock in the morning, three hours after Gandhiji's arrest, a large crowd gathered at Gowalia tank and recorded its determination to carry on the struggle to the finish. After the A.-I.C.C. session had closed. I, with some of my friends, returned to our residence, full of thoughts of different and varied kinds. Every one of us was occupied with the thought of the immediate future of the nation. Gandhiji had summoned 10 to 12 prominent Congress workers for the next morning at Birla house, when he was expected to give his programme. We made free use of our imagination to guess the nature and character of his programme. But alas! The hawkers had to give us a most shocking news before the day could dawn. At 4 o'clock in the morning every paper had a 'leader' which had a different message to give to the nation. Mahatma Gandhi and the members of the Congress working Committee were arrested before they could give a parting message to the nation.

It was as a mark of protest against this assault on the nation that a huge crowd assembled at Gowalia tank. A large number of volunteers, with *Desh Sevikas* attired in their '*Kesharia*' (orange) uniforms, were assembling at Gowalia tank but the police had occupied the *Maidan* and thus had forestalled the people. It was difficult to break through the cordons formed by the police; still a brave young man skillfully glided his car through the huge gathering and brought it near Mr. T. A. Avinashi Lingam Chettier M.L.A. and Mr. C. K. Govinda Nayer, M.L.A. from Coimbatore and Kerala respectively, and some other members of the A.-I.C.C. hailing from the South. The youngman was a son of the late Bhulabhai Desai.

### GAS BOMBS

Immediately after, a European sergeant approached Mr. S. Nilkantha Ayer, President of Kochin State Prajamandal, the most conspicuous and outstanding personality at the occasion, and informed him that the Maidan was under Military control and should be cleared off at once, or else tear gas would be used against them. Mr. Nilkantha, with a smile and a jeer, said, 'I am not incharge of the function. You should inform the right person.' Then he informed Shrimati Aruna Asaf Ali about the sergeant's

order and suggested to her that the boys and girls who, as volunteers, had already taken up their positions must be marched out of the impending danger. It was soon done and as a preliminary to the flag-hoisting ceremony Shrimati Aruna began her speech.

In the meantime, the police put on their hideous gas masks, taken out from the vehicles that had just arrived. They took in their hands the small gas-container and the officers ordered the people to clear out or face the consequences. But the people remained unmoved. Aruna had finished her speech by then and the National Flag had gone up on the pole and began to flutter high in the air.

The devilish policemen started their attack on the masses. The Bombay police made the start by throwing gas-containers on the assembly of volunteers thronged in the Gowalia Tank Maidan. It was so swift an attack that the Pearl Harbour attack paled into insignificance. The volunteers' captain proved too clever for the police. "All lie down" he shouted. The army of volunteers and others obeyed him and lay prostrate on the ground. In two minutes the whole assembly was up on its feet again. There was a second attack by the police which also proved equally ineffective. About half a dozen attempts by the police to disperse the crowd with the use of tear gas having failed, the police changed their tactics. They gave up tear-gasing and took to *lathis*. Some volunteers' leaders were taken into custody. The crowd that had stood firm and calm so far began to disperse under the weight of *lathi* blows. Shri Nilkantha Ayer received two blows upon his upper arms as he was wiping the tears from his burning eyes. Mridula Ben or Mani Ben Patel was also present at the spot, and got her share of the blows. She advised Shri Aiyer not to get arrested at the moment, but to carry back the message of the Congress to the people of his province. The flag remained fluttering for a few moments, after which a British police officer pulled it down and tore it to pieces.

### SHIVAJI PARK MEETING

Nine hours after the incident there was held a mass public meeting at the Shivaji Park. Around the meeting place there was a great show of the armed might of the Government. Tens of thousands of nationalists had however gathered at the place. Speakers sprang up from

among them to address the gathering in the absence of Kasturba, who was arrested when she was about to proceed to the meeting place. There were again *lathi* charges and tear-gas attacks which the people faced in a resolute and cheerful spirit. Men and women in their tens of thousands gathered on their balconies, and dipping their handkerchiefs and towels in water threw them at the people to enable them to face the tear-gas. It was a remarkable sight to see. The British bureaucracy was determined to disperse the crowd by the use of tear-gas. The people were equally resolved to demonstrate their courage by neutralising the effects of the tear-gas. In this way on the 9th of August *lathi* charges were freely made at many places in Bombay, and firing was resorted to at many others. The police was forced to resort to firing about fifteen times and according to Government data 8 persons were killed and 169 wounded.

Bombay knew no rest even after the 9th of August. On the roads, houses, railways and walls were painted Gandhiji's message, 'do or die' and other revolutionary slogans. Hundreds of small meetings were held in which the accumulated grievances of the people against the alien administration were ventilated. *Hartals* were organised in the city, and strikes in colleges, schools and mills. Even some of the railway workshops closed. The people's activities included burning of trams, cars and buses, police-stations and other Government buildings cutting of telegraph and telephone wires; dislodging of rails; dislocating train services and damaging stations and post offices, and many other activities that could possibly be imagined by the people to express their resentment.

### 10TH AUGUST

The Bombay police resorted to firing on ten occasions. The Military fired five times (nothing to say of tear gasing and *lathi*-charging). The result was 16 dead and 141 injured. A Government communique issued on the situation of the 10th August stated that the demonstrations which began on Sunday morning following the detention of the Congress leaders continued throughout Monday morning and afternoon: The areas worst affected were round Girgaon and at Dadar. In both these areas and in other centres, numerous instances of mob-violence occurred. In the after-noon an attempt was made to set the B.B. C.I. Railway station at Dadar on fire, which was foiled by the police. Elsewhere, six

police *Chaukis* were set on fire and two of them were gutted. Some telephone wires were cut, post boxes removed, a municipal lorry over-turned and a tram upset. In some areas buses were immobilised through air being let out of their tyres. In the Fort areas many small roads and lanes were blocked during the morning with bricks, stones and rubble. As soon as these were cleared away by the police, they were replaced by the demonstrators. Other demonstrators picketed labour areas and persuaded mill and other workers to stay away. As a result, a certain amount of dislocation was caused in the textile and a few other industries.

### 11TH AND 12TH AUGUST

In order to curb the high spirits of the people and calm the rising tempo of their bitterness the Government of Bombay introduced the infamous Emergency Whipping Act on the 11th August. Bonfires were started by the people in different parts of the city on 11th and 12th, and hats, neck-ties and other European articles of clothing were freely burnt. The Police opened fire twice before 10 A.M. on the 11th August. Tram, Bus and other vehicular traffic was completely stopped. The G. I. P. and B. B. & C. I. Railway lines were tampered with. The trains stopped working for full two hours. The Matunga Railway station was attacked by the people who also smashed lamp posts. Demonstrations were held at Parel. The schools and colleges remained closed. Most of the mill-workers remained on strike. The city Corporation was adjourned as a protest against the arrest of the Mayor of Bombay, and other prominent persons. The people cut telephone and telegraph wires, attacked post offices, police *chaukies* railway stations, etc., and the police made full use of fire-arms more than ten times, on the 11th and 12th, to disperse the crowds in front of K. E. M. and King George School at Dadar.

### THE 13TH AUGUST

Post offices and post-boxes in Andheri and Ville-parle were damaged, set fire to, and some articles removed from Andheri Post Offices (Dadar). Ville-Parle and suburbs were plunged into complete darkness, all the electric lamps were completely smashed. Sydenham College students organised demonstrations. Traffic was disorganised in South Bombay.

## STRIKES.

The City's markets observed complete *hartal*. The Stock Exchange remained closed, as also the Mangaldas and other Markets in the vicinity. The Municipal Schools remained closed for a week.

## SABOTAGE

Telephone and telegraph wires were damaged and one thousand arrests were made up to 13th August. According to the Government three persons were killed and 42 wounded.

## 14TH AUGUST

Demonstrations were held and processions taken out in Kalba Devi and other places. Local Exchange, cotton and bullion markets, as also the seeds, yarn and cloth markets remained completely closed. 15 persons were arrested and 25 merchants detained under D.I.R. The police opened fire and made *lathi* charges. The people were slapped and caned. Two persons were killed and some injured.

The people kept on demonstrating their anger and bitterness against the British in some way or the other throughout the month of August. Curfew Order was enforced and police were instructed to shoot the law-breakers at sight. In the third week of August though some of the shops and markets were opened according to Government communiques; actually all business in the city remained at a standstill. As a mark of protest against the policy of suppression and oppression followed by the Government, some prominent members of the Corporation tendered resignation. The Government strengthened its hands to effectively put down the rebellion. The strikers were intimidated and told that the demolition of their shops would be the only consequence if they continued striking. Naturally, therefore, faced with such terrible consequences the people desisted from openly rebelling against the Government, and the external manifestations of the movement seemed to disappear for the time being. But actually it was felt that the struggle would be a long one, necessitating the full use of the organised strength of the people. The new leaders had put up their own programme for the coordination of the power, courage, determination, anti-British feelings, and patriotic

ideals of the people. They fixed some days in every month when people would assemble and hold protest meetings, organise demonstrations and take out processions. These were the 9th, 15th and the last Sunday in every month. The demonstrations were made in various manners. There was flag hoisting and salutation, protest-meetings and long processions, and all this despite the Government ban. Special occasions like Independence Day, The Tilak Anniversary, the National Week and the Gandhi Jayanti were taken advantage of for popular demonstrations. This continued till the end of February, 1944.

During Gandhiji's fast in 1943 several batches of volunteers, about 50 in number went to Poona led by Mr. M.R. Massani. They were arrested and sentenced for a period of 3 months. Another batch of volunteers staged a similar march to Aga Khan Palace during August 1943. The total number of volunteers from Bombay who participated in this demonstration was about 100. Most of them were arrested either in Bombay while boarding a train or on the route. A few who could reach Poona were arrested there.

The underground movement of young men and women continued paralysing the Government machinery. Some of the colleges and schools in Bombay were reopened in September 1942, but thousands of students continued participating in public demonstrations, and picketting educational institutions. Five girl-students of Elphinstone College were arrested on the 1st of September in this connection.

The total number of arrests in Bombay Province throughout these two long years can roughly be estimated at 5000. Of these about 1000 persons were released after 2 months of detention, and 450-500 were convicted to various terms ranging from six weeks to five years. The maximum sentence passed for holding flag salutation was  $2\frac{1}{2}$  years. In the famous 'Radio Case' one Congress man and a young Congress girl got five and four years imprisonment respectively. The nature of arrests, and the classes under which the arrests were effected, may be given as follows :

- (1) For belonging to an unlawful association.
- (2) For participating in any kind of demonstration.
- (3) For striking and holding meeting.

- (4) For picketing shops and forcing the shopkeepers to close down their shops.
- (5) For printing, publishing, possessing or distributing prejudicial literature, and reading out bulletins to groups of persons.
- (6) For shouting slogans and writing them on walls and public high ways.
- (7) For assisting mill-workers in going on strike.
- (8) For throwing stones or soda-water bottles.
- (9) For acts of sabotage, tampering with telephone and telegraph wires, and possession of explosive materials.
- (10) For violating the post, telegraph and radio Acts.
- (11) For breaking Curfew Orders, and police orders prohibiting the carrying of lethal weapons.
- (12) For giving shelter to absconders.
- (13) For doing or proposing to do prejudicial acts.

### SABOTAGE ACTIVITIES

It was in the fourth week of September, 1942 that the first bomb burst in Bombay. Thereafter a number of such explosions occurred till Gandhiji's fast in February 1943. Cases of incendiarism were not infrequent. Fire in the Mazaon Police Court reducing the premises to ashes, on October 3, 1943; and in the paper godown of the Times of India at Argyle Road resulting in damage to the extent of Rs. 2,00,000/-, are the major occurrences connected with sabotage activities with which the youthful patriots of the time busied themselves. The police made many arrests on suspicion or otherwise in this connection. Most of them were detained and a few placed before Magistrates to stand their trials. Of the latter almost all were acquitted for want of evidence. Those found guilty in the lower courts were acquitted by the High Court. But the police re-arrested practically all of them and kept them under detention under D.I.R. The maximum sentence given under the Explosive Act was 5 years. Very harsh treatment was meted out to those people, and horrible atrocities perpetrated on them. There are reports of the use of third degree methods by the police to elicit information. In a few cases the police succeeded because the accused were too much tortured.

There were two serious lathi charges on detenues and other prisoners in Worli Jail in Bombay. Several detenues were seriously injured.

The people at last desisted from participating openly in the rebellion, on account of the repressive measures adopted by the police, but secretly all their energies were harnessed to give a secret and determined fight to the British.

## RADIO BROADCASTS

Bombay is a progressive city. In and during every movement it has infused new life, and introduced many innovations. For the last many decades, Bombay has made splendid contributions, both in money and technique, to the movements started by the Congress. Despite the restrictions imposed and stringent measures adopted by the administration many new things and new techniques were introduced in the movement of 1942. Bulletins were brought out for about a full year, in English and other Provincial languages, for propaganda purposes. Several raids were organised, many arrests made, and printing presses confiscated in this connection.

One of the remarkable features of this movement was that a radio, established by some zealous workers of the Congress, was broadcasting the news concerning the movement; indicating the suppressive measures adopted by Government and the future programme of the movement. This radio was somewhere in the Bombay city. It worked well in the beginning, but after some time only spasmodically. The Station was raided in November 1942 and some arrests made at the spot. The Radio material was confiscated, and the suspects sentenced to 4 or 5 years imprisonment. Though many bulletin cars were captured, and lakhs of bulletins were brought into Government possession still the bulletins were carried even in the homes of highly placed Government officials; and the news and views sent in the air by the Bombay Radio Station reached every nook and corner of the country.

## LOCAL PRESS

By special order, the Central Government enforced certain prohibitory regulations on the press on the 10th of August, 1942. The papers were strictly warned not to publish any news regarding the Movement, much less

to give publicity to the mass-movement sanctioned by the All India Congress Committee. The press was entirely gagged. The securities of many papers were forfeited and many others were compelled to stop publication. Still the surviving papers gave full cooperation to the insurgents and published many bulletins pertaining to the Movement. The Press *Hartal* in connexion with Prof. Bhansale's fast was most successful. The Honours' list on the new year day, January 1943, was ignored by the local press. There was a *hartal* by the local press (with the exception of the Times of India) on another occasion.

## THE COMMERCIAL AND BUSINESS COMMUNITY

Though the closing of shops and restaurants was forbidden by new Defence of India Rules yet the part that was played by the Commercial and Business associations and other important markets in the city was splendid and unique. There was a meeting of all the Commercial organisations affiliated to the Indian Merchants' Chamber to consider the abnormal conditions obtaining in the country, and the steps taken up by the Government to meet them. They took serious exception to the treatment meted out to responsible citizens by the Police and the Military, by making them remove rubbish that lay scattered in the roads, specially in Bhuleshwar, Matunga and Dadar, and expressed their appreciation and approval of the Congress resolution and endorsed it. The local markets were with the Congress throughout, and observed *hartals* whenever called upon to do so.

## LABOUR

Very little part was played by the labour in general and by textile labour in particular, in the movement. Far greater work in connection with the movement was done by the Ahmedabad labour. The Communist influence on the Bombay labour was greater and the communists had recorded their dissentient voice when the 'Quit India' resolution was put to the vote. Moreover a great majority of muslim labourers, who secretly sympathised with the Movement could not for various reasons take active and open part in it. The textile mills except for the first week after the 9th August, when they were closed owing to serious disturbances in the City, remained working throughout the period. The general exodus of March 1942 was over and

there was no question of unemployment. Lastly, with the arrest of all the workers of the Kamgar Seva Sangh in the very beginning, the last link between the Congress and the labour had been cut off and it was found very difficult later on to contact workers even for the purpose of distributing propaganda literature.

### THE STUDENTS

The student community of Bombay had had the opportunity of playing a noble role. They sacrificed their studies and ventured their future for a cause which was so dear to their heart. Their example was emulated by their brethren in other Provinces. About '80 per cent of the students participated in the Movement. They left their schools and colleges, organised the demonstrations, led the mobs and most of them went under-ground. Many students were rusticated or prevented from appearing for their examinations in 1943. The attempts of the University authorities, as also of the Government, who warned the students, by a press note, against absenting themselves from schools and colleges, had no effect. Even the threat of striking off their names from school and college rolls was used, but with no better results. The students returned to their institutions after 3 or 4 months. Though the enthusiasm of many of them had very much cooled down at a later stage, they bore cheerfully the hardships of a true soldier's life.

### THE MUNICIPAL CORPORATION

The Municipal Corporation of Bombay was under Congress control in 1942. After the arrest of Congress leaders the Municipal Corporation denounced the Government for its surprise attacks on the Congress and as a mark of protest adjourned *sine die*. On the 10th April 1943 Shri. Nagindass T. Master who was in jail, was elected as Mayor of Bombay Corporation. Out of 63 congressite city fathers 33 were in detention.

The Bombay Bar also did remarkable service to the nation by actively promoting the movement. A Committee of 4 prominent Advocates was formed to defend the civil liberties of the people against the repressive policy followed by the Government. Mr. D.N. Bahadurji, Ex-advocate General, Mr K.P. Pural Pao Wala, ex-Judge.

Bombay High Court, K. M. Munshi, ex-Home Minister, were the members of the Committee. They also formed a Legal Aid Committee to fight for the rights of the citizens, which were being attacked by the Executive. They also rendered monetary assistance to the needy (to individuals and families connected with the political activities) apart from the legal aid. Prominent citizens of Bombay cooperated with them and thus came into being the Political Sufferers' Aid Fund. According to the B. P.C.C. the fund afforded monetary relief throughout India as follows:

Maharashtra	...	86 persons
Gujerat	...	13 "
Karnataka	...	175 "
Tamil	...	9 "
Malabar	...	5 "
Andhra	...	87 "
Bihar	...	38 "
Bombay	...	15 "
Orissa	...	171 "
U.P.	...	163 "
C.P.	...	38 "

Thus the Committee tried to assist all the needy political sufferers without any provincial bias.

It is difficult to give with any degree of certainty the number of persons who actively participated in the Movement in Bombay. But in the initial stages of the Movement people from the majority of the towns and cities of the Province took part in it. They knew that Congress represented not only their ideals and objectives but also what they were. They completely identified themselves with the Congress.

## 2—KARNATAKA

No. of people arrested	...	7439
Villages destroyed	...	225
Rest houses and bungalows attacked	...	34
Collective fines	Rs.	3,36,400/-
Toddy trees destroyed worth	Rs.	10,200/-

Train Derailments	...	13
Wire cutting	...	1,680

## SOCIO-ECONOMIC BACKGROUND

The second division of the Bombay Presidency on linguistic basis is Karnataka. This is a Congress Province and mainly consists of two regions intermingled with each other. One called the British Karnataka and the other State Karnataka. Upto 1920 the life of the people in these two regions had run in different channels. To add to this anomaly British Karnataka lies divided between two presidencies-Bombay and Madras. State Karnataka is divided not only between the big states of Mysore and Hyderabad but between 16 other smaller estates. The Congress at its session at Nagpur in 1920 consolidated all these into a single Karnataka Province so far as the Congress work and Congress administration was concerned. It now comprises 19 districts with a population of about one crore sixty five lakhs. This fusion into a single Congress unit breathed new life into the people of Karnataka who began to throb with the thrill of unity. Their past history began to inspire them to act for and shape a new and common future for themselves.

Karnataka has a glorious history of its own. It was once great not only in politics but also in culture, art, commerce, adventure, and science. The great Vijayanagar Kingdom of the 14th and 15th centuries repulsed the invading Muslim Imperialists and existed as a sovereign state.

Karnataka music even to-day claims a place of honour by the side of Hindustani Music, which is the only other school of music in India. Vidyaranya and Madhavacharya are great names in Sanskrit scholarship and philosophy. Vasava, the social reformer had his home in Karnataka. The martial tradition in Karnataka is well-known in the south. The Reddis, the Talwars, the Bedars, the Nayaks are all born soldiers and between them they claimed not only the whole of Karnataka but many times they over-ran far bigger territory in Andhra, Maharashtra, Tamil Nad and even Gujerat. In 1857 there were heroes who fought to the last. Karnataka has always played a glorious role in all the freedom movements launched by patriotic India, and always stood loyally by the Congress. Being the home of Hindustani Sewadal Movement

karnataka is known for its discipline. All the national movements since the days of Tilak, and later the Satyagraha campaigns imbued the people of Karnataka with nationalism and a spirit of resistance.

### GANDHIJI'S MESSAGE

Shri Gopal Rao Belvadi approached Mahatma Gandhi for a message after the latter was appointed to give lead to the nation. 'I expect all the Karnatakis to play their full part in the coming *yagyan*': said Mahatmaji. Sjt. Belvadi took this message to Karnataka. The message was partly responsible for the remarkable courage and force of will that was shown by the people of Karnataka when faced with most barbarous type of treatment, meted out to them by the military and police employed by the authorities. The Karnatakis faced the situation bravely and squarely. The numerous *lathi-charges*, firings, the excesses of the police and military, arrests amounting to 2000 and collective fines to the extent of about 2 lakhs, all failed to cow down the brave Karnatakis. Gandhiji's parting message at the A.-I. C. C. exhorting the people to treat themselves as free citizens and to 'do or die' spread to the towns and the countryside.

### PROGRESS OF THE MOVEMENT

The movement in Karnataka can be split up into three stages. The first stage began on the 9th August and ended on the 16th September. It was a stage of spontaneous outburst when people took the law into their hands. People rose in revolt in every town and in every village. It was unorganised and very temporary. The people wanted to give vent to their crystallised bitterness but had no programme with them. So they only organised meetings and *hartals*, took out processions and arranged demonstrations.

The second stage of the movement commenced on the 18th September, 1942 and closed on November 5, 1943. The people were much more organised and disciplined and attacked many Government institutions on a very wide scale. They had efficient leaders who skillfully organised and consolidated the energies and bitterness of the people. Many telephone and telegraph wires were tampered with and rails dislodged.

They busied themselves with defiant and dislocation activities. Persistence and audacity characterised this stage of the movement.

The third stage began on November 5, 1943 and closed on November 5, 1944, the day Mahatma Gandhi was released: It was very much organised by the same set of people but wholly in the traditional *satyagraha* way. On the release of Mahatma Gandhi all resistance practically ceased. Most of the workers, about 30 at the time, surrendered themselves according to Gandhiji's advice.

The programme and the actions taken up can clearly be grouped into two parts (a) defiant activities of Civil Disobedience type, (b) dislocation activities calculated to paralyse the Government machinery.

(a) *Defiant activities*

One can hardly give statistics regarding the defiant activities, though one can describe the nature of such activities:

- (1) Breaking all restraint orders against meetings and processions.
- (2) Breach of law against restrictions on the press and cyclostyle.
- (3) Possessing and distributing the so-called prejudicial literature.
- (4) Breach of the salt-law.
- (5) Picketing of courts and liquor-shops.
- (6) Ticketless travelling.
- (7) March on the prohibited places.

These defiant activities were carried on on a very large scale in different parts of the Province, at different times, with varying intensity. Mere arrests give no idea of the measure of these activities as comparatively few arrests took place. It was the *lathi*, the rifle and the indiscriminate use of the D.I.R. and other ordinances that sought to keep the people in check.

(b) *The dislocation activities.*

There were twelve types of dislocation activities as stated below:

- (1) Cutting of the telegraph and telephone wires, and uprooting or damaging of telegraph posts was universally carried on. About 1600 of such successful or un-successful cases had been reported.
- (2) Village records in 220 villages were seized and destroyed.
- (3) About 32 post-offices, big and small, were damaged, 18 were closed down by the Government. About 51% post-boxes were destroyed, and hundred mail-bags were seized and destroyed. About 16 mail buses were attacked and mail-bags destroyed.
- (4) About 34 dak bungalows were destroyed or damaged (excluding Mysore state). They were being used as camps for the police and revenue officers.
- (5) About 65 toddy and *ganja* shops were attacked, toddy and *ganja* destroyed. About 50 *pakhalis* (leather boxes) were cut open and toddy allowed to run to waste.
- (6) 257 *chabdis* or Government village offices were destroyed or damaged.
- (7) Wood and timber for war purposes worth Rs. 1,50,00/- was destroyed.
- (8) About 26 railway stations were damaged and dislocated.
- (9) There were about 11 derailments and 13 instances of removal of rails and damage to railway property. Only in one case, by mistake, was a passenger train involved, but fortunately there was no serious injury to anybody. In all other cases goods trains were involved and were attacked and looted.
- (10) About 25 culverts, big and small, were totally or partially destroyed.
- (11) There was no no-tax campaign this time, but the revenue collected by the Government was seized in about 7 cases and the amount, Rs. 10,200/-, went to the coffers of the committees.
- (12) In all about 30 constables and police officers were disarmed. The arms seized were dumped away.

The characteristic feature of this Movement was that private property was not attacked. Such property when found in the mail was returned. It was thought that the Government had no right of collecting money without the consent of the people. So did the people of the revolting states of America when they declared : 'No taxation without representation'. So revenue began to be seized. It was unfortunate that some schools and school records were burnt (presumably as a few of them were being used as police stations). When this was known, instructions were issued by the leaders not to do so in future.

### REPRESSION

The most barbarous type of repression and terrorism was resorted to this time, as everywhere else in India. There were excesses as well as atrocities. Police officers in many cases tried to threaten even innocent people, and extorted money on a large scale. There was torture and arrest of relatives of absconders, driving them away from their houses and locking them up, arresting the old father or mother for not giving information regarding their absconding sons or daughters, taking military to the villages and cordoning them off, not allowing people even to go to answer the calls of nature for hours together. These and such other barbarities followed in the wake of the movement.

In the beginning the number of people proclaimed to be offenders under the Defence of India Rules and evading the warrants issued against them in the districts of Dharwar, Belgaon and North Kanara was 30, 20 and 14, respectively. Later 238 persons were further 'proclaimed' in Dharwar district alone. The majority of these had neither surrendered themselves nor had they been found out in spite of the vigorous attempts of the police. Their efforts being fruitless, the military was summoned. They surrounded the suspected parts of Dharwar and North Kanara districts. They wandered over hills and through jungles and surrounded and invaded villages every night. Their usual procedure was to leave the lorry at a distance, stealthily surround the whole Village at dead of night, occupy streets, order each man to stay at his place, prevent persons from going even to answer calls of Nature in the early morning and then to make a search of suspected places for 'wanted' workers. Three illustrations will suffice here. (1) A

military force in more than fifty lorries invaded the village of Akkatangerahal in the Belgaon district and surrounded it on the morning of November 6 and searched many houses. At the time of the visit every telegraph post was guarded by the military and the police. The D.S.P., the Dy. S.P. and four Sub-Inspectors were present. Nothing incriminating was found. Only two Charkha Sangh workers were arrested but later on both of them had to be released. (2) On November 3 a little after mid-night hundreds of militarymen invaded Sankeshwar. Armed police took guard in the fields surrounding the village as well as in the streets and men were neither permitted to move from house to house nor even to go for answering calls of Nature. The house of Shri Appanna Patil was searched but he was not to be found. Some 20 to 30 persons were taken into custody and all of them except three were released subsequently. (3) The D.S.P. of North Kanara started from Ankola via Basgod and Luvare with hundreds of police men, while the sub-Inspector started from Gokaran, and between them they simultaneously searched each house in the enclosed ten villages, the hills and forests in their vicinity and effected a few arrests.

Operations like these were frequent, and it is noteworthy that the people protected the workers, who were their near and dear ones, against the attacks of the invaders, taking all the humiliations and sufferings on their heads. It is also a matter of satisfaction and pride that in spite of these operations of the police and the military the majority of these 'wanted men' moved like free men.

It was now not merely the cordoning of villages and searching of houses; indeed, a regular man-hunt was carried on in many places. People were chased in the surrounding fields of the villages with torch lights and guns. Occasionally, flare bombs were used and anything looking like a human being was shot at. There were a few cases of people wounded in these man-hunts. There were brutal beatings by the police and two persons were reported to have died by vomiting blood. One more committed suicide when left off on the 3rd day after ghastly beating. Running pins in finger tips, severe beatings for days together, swinging men by the legs and dashing them down, making them lie on ice, and such other cruelties were also reported. Many tortures and mental agonies were created for the people. One school-master was

dragged down from the bus and was beaten blue for the crime of shouting Congress slogans. At Bedkihal four teeth of a boy were knocked out because he would not furnish information about the absconders.

In Karnataka the police opened fire at about 18 places. In Bangalore firing was resorted to at five places in two days. The total dead and wounded were 178 and 520 respectively. *Lathi*-charges were made at 16 places 31 times, about 89 people were seriously wounded and some were beaten till they were unconscious. Many hundreds were slightly injured. Rewards for the arrests of about 25 absconders were announced, ranging from Rs 250 to Rs 500 and about 350 persons were Gazetted to be proclaimed offenders. Collective fines worth Rs. 3,36,000 were levied on a number of villages and towns the heaviest being in Nipani (more than one lakh). Attachments for collection of collective fines were carried out in about 15 villages. About 3000 such attachments were made and utensils, cattle and other household belongings of the people were auctioned. For the destruction of telephone and telegraph wires and damaging of post offices and other buildings, fines were imposed on about 17 villages. Very heavy sentences were given in some cases: Five persons were sentenced to death, and 11 transported for life.

Some of these areas resisted the payment of their fines. Prominent amongst them may be mentioned Pacchapur, Hire-bagwadi and Hosur in Belgaon district and Kangile and Gokarna in North Kanara District. At Hire-bagwadi when the Deputy Collector visited the village on the 15th of November for realising the fines the patils and kulkarnis of the village refused to cooperate with him in the work of collection. In each of these places moveable property including corn, ornaments, daily utensils and milch-buffaloes, was attached. The Commissioner for the Northern Division wrote to the Government that far from their being a deterrent the collective fines embittered the feelings of the people. The Commissioner for the Southern Division made similar observations. Not only were collective fines imposed indiscriminately and without justification, but even the manner and the method of collection were outrageous. The people's houses were virtually looted, to make up the fines. Even food-stuffs, cattle and similar other things were seized and carried away. This was nothing short of the looting indulged in by an invading army. The Judiciary acquitted many persons who had been sentenced

by the magistrates to long terms of imprisonment without regard for any principles, and in the absence of eye-witnesses.

As stated above very heavy sentences had been awarded in some cases: Five persons were sentenced to death and 11 transported for life. In Issur Case, in Mysore State, in six cases seven years' rigorous imprisonment, in 24 cases five years' R.I., in 15 cases 4 years' R.I. and in 120 cases 3 years' R.I. was given. (This was upto August 1944). The number of arrests was about 7,156, of which about 25,00 arrests were in Mysore State.

In Karnataka the movement of resistance developed to a very high pitch, but it was remarkably free from any trace of violence or attack on private property on the part of the people. It should be noted here that the workers were very careful about private property, as may be seen from the following examples:

(1) At Amergol, when the Station Master complained to the chief worker that his purse was missing, the chief worker immediately gave him a sum of Rs. 4/- that he had and promised that his purse would be restored.

(2) At Devanagere, when a European lady passenger reported the loss of her purse, the man who had taken it was asked by the people not only to return it but to apologise to her for his indiscretion.

(3) When the police quarters at Ankalgi were attacked in January 1943 it was seen that the women and personal belongings of the police were removed to a safe place before the quarters were completely gutted. There were numerous examples showing the honesty of the people, even in the midst of an all-pervading bitterness against the authorities.

I have tried to draw a pen picture of the external forms of this great open rebellion in the whole of the Karnataka province. The movement was widely spread in this province, and well-organised; and it seems that the leaders, were well adept in the art of organising the people. In this province both the types of the movement viz. organised and sabotaging thrived but in both the forms the unity and discipline of the people were maintained. That is why the energy of the people was not frittered away in their spasmodic attacks on the administration. I have made it amply clear that the Karnatakis are a brave people and worship and admire valour. So many

instances of valour are found in the history of this movement, shown by the Karnatakis that one is thrilled and feels proud of living in such an age and in such a country. If acts of such valour, courage and determination had been performed by their soldiers in Europe, the British would have awarded many titles, decorations and medals to them, but since we were fighting against the British they gave bullets and *lathi* blows by way of rewards to our heroes. A free India will surely award to these heroes of the freedom movement the Gandhi or the Nehru Cross.

### HEROIC DEEDS

A boy of tender age, Narain Dani, succumbed to injuries and when asked by the attending doctor what he wanted, the brave lad gasped in his last moment 'I want Swaraj and nothing else'. Next day a huge funeral procession, 15 000 strong, accompanied his bier, paying homage to the remains of one who had been the innocent victim of the whims of a drunkard officer.

(2) At Kadavi—Shivapur in Belgaon District, the villagers assembled in a public meeting with a patil as president and passed a resolution declaring independence. On learning this, the D. S. P., with a force of armed Constables went to the village and found *prabhat pheries* going round. The police officer ordered them to disperse, but he was told by the leader of the procession, Shri Shetteppa Jyotteppa, that they were free men and as such the D. S. P. had no right to order their dispersal. The D. S. P. threatened firing but without any effect. The leader of the procession remained undeterred and was shot dead at the spot.

(3) At Savadatti, when a prominent citizen, named Annappa Padki was arrested and taken to the Mamlatdar's office a huge crowd rushed and besieged it, demanding the release of the arrested person. The Mamlatdar had to yield.

### STUDENTS

Like their brethren of other provinces the student population of Karnataka burst into unusual activity after August 9. They left their schools and colleges, organised themselves without waiting for any lead, busied themselves in organising continuous *hartals*,

defiance of laws and restrictions, and propaganda marches in villages. At places they even went to the extent of taking part in the burning of stations and bogies, as in Devanager and Banaver. Everywhere, at the risk of *lathi*-charges and arrests the students took out marches and processions, held meetings and flag salutations. Not a few of them were busy in bringing out bulletins of their own and distributing them. They went to villages in groups and about 200 of them took active part in the village programme. In Dharwar, Hubli, Gadag and Belgaon the students invariably burnt foreign caps and clothes, and distributed *khadi* caps to officers, teachers and professors. About 300 of the most active workers were arrested. For days together they performed ticketless journeys between Banavar and Devanager, put up a national flag on the engine, made European passengers travel by third class, and gave *khadi sari* and caps to European ladies and gentlemen in the train. It is noteworthy that girls took a leading part at most of the places.

## LABOUR

The industrial area in Karnataka is very much limited if we exclude the Mysore state. However, immediately after the arrest of the Congress leaders the Bharat Mills and railway workshop of Hubli observed *hartal* for a day.

## SPECIAL FEATURES

While reviewing these activities, a few important features that made the struggle what it was, may be noted. The all India C.I.D. report written about the month of November, 1942 remarked that the prominent Congress leaders in Karnataka managed to remain out and that the simultaneous burning of railway stations by bands of suspects bore the marks of coordination and organisation. In fact workers who had spent tens of years doing constructive work among the villagers were still out and it was they who were able to inspire confidence in the people and carry them along with them on the path of sacrifice. Though the number of those who actually carried out the work was small all villagers were behind them and sympathised with them, and in case of need even sheltered them. They studiously avoided any major clash and strictly adhered to non-injury to life. There was not a single incident where the workers went in for

violence to person or personal property. They did not aim at activities which required technical skill and knowledge, in addition to considerable man-power.

### COURAGE OF THE PEOPLE

It must be said to the credit of the people that they rose to the occasion and needs of the time. Despite many tortures and privations they kept aloft the flag of liberty. Resentment sank deeper into their souls, but they demonstrated marvellous powers of endurance and sacrifice. Even children could face *lathis* and bullets smilingly. The advent of the military in the villages was looked upon as some curious routine. Confessions given under duress were upset and retracted. Cheerfully did thousands go to jail and bear heavy sentences with a light heart. All villages resisted paying fines and sheltered workers throughout, at all risks. They could retaliate and avenge the blood of their innocent kinsmen. But throughout did they remain non-violent. Whenever the military entered a village the people of that village somehow or the other informed their compatriots in other villages that they must be careful and should not be caught unawares.

### THE LAST PHASE OF THE MOVEMENT

The last phase of the movement opened when the Karnataka Satyagraha Samiti was instituted on November 5, 1943. After that open and defiant activities began again in full swing. Processions, meetings, distribution of proscribed literature, protests against food policy, small conferences organised for the same in defiance of the prohibitory orders, and observance of certain days, followed. During the six months from November 5, 1943 to May 5, 1944 about 400 persons belonging to both the sexes courted arrest.

On the 6th of May, 1944 Mahatmajj was released. Between that date and 9th of August, 1944 most of the workers in Karnataka decided to surrender themselves according to Mahatma Gandhi's wishes. Thus ended the great revolt that began with a flare of mass action and continued as a persistent active movement for about 12 months, then again took the form of open defiant action for six months, and finally ceased after the workers surrendered themselves on or before the 9th August, 1944.

## SOME TELL-TALE FIGURES

Though it is almost impossible to give correct figures of any Province connected with this Movement the Congress Leaders of Karnataka had organised and conducted the movement in such a disciplined, determined and organised manner in each village and town that an approximate idea of the volume of activity by the people, as well as the amount of repression by the Government, can be had from the following figures. I am giving only such information as could be available. It is only significant cases that have been reported and recorded here, while innumerable cases of wire-cutting and other small dislocation activities have not been reported:

## I. ARRESTS

<i>District</i>	<i>Number</i>
Belgaon	2326
Bellary	151
Bijapur	365
Coorg	74
Dharawar	1337
North Kanara	644
South Kanara	38
Mysore State	2504
	<hr/>
Total	7439
	<hr/>

## II. PROCLAIMED OFFENDERS

Belgaon	22
Dharwar	284
North Kanara	14
	<hr/>
Total	320
	<hr/>

## III. REWARDS

Rewards ranging from Rs. 250 to Rs. 50,000 were announced for information leading to the arrest of about 19 workers in the province; Dharwar 10; Belgaon 9.

## IV. FIRING

<i>Place</i>	<i>Dead</i>	<i>Wounded</i>
Bailhongal	7	9
Nippani	2	8
Shivapur	1	1
Koligud	—	?
Khavatikop	1	6
Hubli	1	18
Hosaritti	3	0
Balgalore	150	450
Devanagar	6	?
Tiptu	2	?
Dankoppal	3	?
Shravanabelgola	5	?
Chitra Durga (figures not available)		
Issur	do	
Mysore	do	
Thumkur	do	
Gubbi	do	
Hassan	do	

In all, about 181 died and 530 were wounded. Infantry and cavalry were on the scene in Bangalore city and tear-gas and firing was resorted to frequently for two days.

## V. LATHI-CHARGES

<i>Place</i>	<i>No. of times</i>	<i>Wounded</i>
Belgaon	6	65
Gadag	3	3
Haveri	2	8
Tahkote	—	2
Ankola	2	—
Mangalore	6	—
Karkal	—	11
Bangalore City	10	—
Bangalore Cantt.	2	—

Bellary	}	(figures not known)
Karwar		
Sirsi		
Honnavar		
Kumtha		
Mysore		
Chickmaglur		
Saligram		
Shravana Belgoia.		

## VI. STRIPES

15 stripes were awarded to Shri Sanjeeva Kamath of south Kanara District on a charge of cutting telegraph wires.

## VII. HEAVY SENTENCES

<i>Persons</i>		<i>Period</i>
5		sentenced to death
11	to	transportation for life
6	to	7 years R. I.
64	to	5 years R. I.
15	to	4 "
120	to	3 "

Usually the sentences ranged from 6 months R. I. to 2 years R. I., and in many cases the conviction took place after months of rotting in District and Taluka police lock-ups as under-trials.

## VIII. COLLECTIVE FINES

<i>District</i>	<i>No. of villages and towns</i>	<i>Amount</i>
Belgaon	12	Rs. 2,06,000
Bijapur	1	2,000
Dharwar	23	63,900
North Kanara	29	53,500
Mysore State	4	2,000
Jamkhandi State	1	9,000
	<hr/> 70	<hr/> 3,36,4000

Nippani Town alone had to pay fine of a lakh and a half rupees

#### IX. ATTACHMENTS FOR COLLECTIVE FINES ETC.

<i>District</i>	<i>Place</i>
Belgaon	Pachapur, Bailhongal.
North Kanara	Malavalli Manalli Kodsar, Hosmani, Nanagile Bole, Sagadgeri, Hadava and Gokarna.

#### X. RAILWAY STATIONS ATTACKED

British Karnatak;	(1) Suldhal (2) Tavaragatti (3) Gunji (4) Raibag (5) Desur (6) Sulebhavi (7) Jumnal (8) Minchinal (9) Amergol (10) Kusugal (11) Hebsur (12) Byadagi (13) Hulukoti (14) Savanur (15) Hole-Alur (16) Nimbal
Mysore State;	(1) Devanager (2) Tiputur (3) Mayakonda (4) Banavar (5) Banasandra (6) Kodaganur (7) Holalkere (8) Chick-Jajur (9) Hosadurga;

#### XI. DERAILMENTS ETC.

	<i>Derailments.</i>	<i>Removal of rails etc.</i>	<i>Damage to property</i>
British Karnatak	8	5	3
Mysore State	3	8	10
	<hr/> 11	<hr/> 13	<hr/> 13

There was one derailment in British Karnatak in which a passenger train was involved by mistake. However, there was no injury and at no time were the passenger trains contemplated to be the targets.

#### XII. BRIDGES AND CULVERTS DAMAGED

About 25 minor incidents (including those in Mysore State) were recorded, wherein culverts and bridges were either destroyed or partially damaged.

## XIII. CUTTING OF WIRES

<i>District</i>	<i>Incidents</i>
Belgaon	560
Bellary	130
Bijapur	70
Dharwar	390
North Kanara	180
Mysore State	350
Coorg	<i>not known</i>
Total	1680

## XIV. POST-OFFICES DAMAGED

Belgaon District ;	Nippani, Nandagad, Bailhongal, Savadatti, Ganapathigalli (Belgaum City) and 12 other Post Offices,
Bijapur District	Bagaikot
Dharwar District ;	9 Post Offices.
Mysore State	Mangalore City Head Post Office and 3 other Post Offices in the city.

Letters were burnt in the Head Post Offices at Belgaon, Gokak, Buvli, Byadagi, Sirsi and Siddapur.

## XV. ATTACK ON MAIL BUSES AND CAPTURE OF MAIL BAGS ETC.

<i>District.</i>	<i>No. of buses attacked</i>	<i>No. of times bags captured</i>	<i>Post boxes destroyed</i>
Belgaon	7	72	—
Bellary	1	1	25
Bijapur	—	3	5
Dharwar	5	29	—
North Kanara	3	3	—
Mysore State	—	—	12

Note:—18 sub-post offices in Belgaon District were closed due to the widespread activities in this direction. For instance the whole of Bailhongal *taluka* was served for some time from the Taluka Post Office only.

## XVI. VILLAGE RECORDS DESTROYED

<i>District.</i>	<i>Number.</i>
Belgaon	136
Dharwar	64
North Kanara	25
	<hr/> 225

XVII. DAK BANGALOWS AND REST HOUSES  
ATTACKED

<i>District.</i>	<i>Number.</i>
Belgaon	17
Bellary	1
Bijapur	3
Dharwar	9
North Kanara	4
	<hr/> 34

XVIII. TODDY AND GANJA SHOPS RAIDED  
AND PAKHALIS CUT OPEN

<i>District</i>	<i>No. of shops</i>	<i>No. of Pakhalis</i>
Belgaon	36	21
Dharwar	18	11
Mysore state	11	8

There was toddy shop picketting at four places in the Mysore State. In Bangalore City all excise shops were closed for a month. About 250 toddy trees were cut near Benchinal in Belgaon District and about 50 trees near Hassan in the Mysore State.

XIX. DAMAGE TO GOVERNMENT PROPERTY  
(CHAVADIES Etc.)

<i>District</i>	<i>No. of incidents</i>
Belgaon	161
Bellary	3
Bijapur	5
Dharwar	69
North Kanara	20
	<hr/> Total <hr/> 258

## XX. SEIZURE OF REVENUE

<i>Place</i>		<i>Amount</i>
Dodwad	Rs.	1,500
Tolgi		3,000
Honnur		650
Tigadolli		450
Negalur		800
Itagi & Saslur		8000
Bebbal		3,000
		<hr/> 10,200

## XXI. DESTRUCTION OF WAR MATERIALS

1. Gangavathi (North Kanara); Timber for war supply collected at the mouth of the Gangavathi river was burnt, entailing a loss of about one lakh of rupees.

2. Hattikeri (North Kanara); Teak wood depot was burnt; Loss of about Rs. 15,000.

3. Sirsi (North Kanara); Government wood stocked at Sirsi was destroyed by fire.

4. Belgaon; Two military hay-stacks were burnt. Loss about Rs 20,000.

## XXII. DISARMING OF POLICE

There were 9 major instances reported, wherein more than 29 police officers and men were disarmed, and their weapons taken away. In addition to these, many guns were removed from the house of police Patils and swords and other weapons from *chavadies* and such other places.

## 3—MAHARASHTRA

- |                     |                      |
|---------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Eastern Khandesh | 7. Thana             |
| 2. Western Khandesh | 8. Kolaba            |
| 3. Nasik            | 9. Ratangiri         |
| 4. Ahmednagar       | 10. Subaran District |
| 5. Poona            | 11. Sholapur         |
| 6. Satara           |                      |

## SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

The province is full of beautiful mountains and fer-

tile extensive valleys. It is the proud home of the Great Marathas, the people who kept the candle of freedom burning against the Muslim Emperors, and gave many tough and successful fights to the Muslim Imperial forces. True to the traditions of the past the Maharastra always stood, as a body, against the British, whenever Mahatma Gandhi and the Congress launched freedom movements.

Nature has endowed the people of Maharashtra with the bliss of health, and the mountainous nature of the province has made them very hardy, painstaking and full of fortitude. Again, the geographical position of the Province is such that guerilla warfare can be organised successfully.

There is internal strife between two main classes of the people i.e. Brahmins and non-Brahmins. The former occupied almost all the offices of high state authority and have concentrated in their hands all the means and factors of production and progress. The Congress never made any capital out of this situation. It favoured neither of the two, with the result that both the classes have been with the Congress. But the non-Brahmin people of these districts have always tried to destroy and annihilate the caste-arrogance of the Brahmins through the Congress and to seize power from their hands. They found the best opportunity for the realization of their dream in 1942 and that is why the Kisans and the cotton growers of this Province played a very great role in the movement of 1942, as they did never before.

## LABOUR

The textile workers of Ahmednagar and Poona have always been well organised, and under the influence of Mahatma Gandhi, there have been cordial relations between labour and capital. Almost all the mill-owners and industrial magnates of these cities have deep regard for Mahatma Gandhi, and have always openly expressed themselves in favour of the Congress, whenever they were faced with a choice between the British and the Congress. For a number of weeks the textile mills of Ahmednagar remained closed and the mill-owners did not resent the absence of their workers. Mill-workers came in the streets, took out processions, organised meetings, hoisted the tri-colour and vehemently condemned the arrests of National leaders.

## NATURE AND SCOPE OF THE MOVEMENT

Everywhere in the beginning, after the arrest of the Congress leaders, peaceful demonstrations were held, but soon the British bureaucracy tried to suppress the movement by using deadly weapons and firearms and making *lathi*-charges. The people were soon unnerved, and had no heart to openly rebel against the authorities. It did not mean that they had succumbed to the repressive machinery and measures. Not at all most of them went underground organised and guerilla war-fare in the interior and mountainous regions, and continued embarrassing the authorities by various acts of sabotage and secret attacks. Women took prominent part even in the interior of the province. Shrimati Leela Patil, wife of Dr. Uttam Patil of Eastern Khandesh, continued giving head-ache to the administration for many months. She was arrested, and sentenced to six years; but after escaping from police-custody, gave valiant leadership to the kisans of the Eastern Khandesh.

The whole of Maharastra, rural as well as urban responded whole-heartedly to the call of the struggle. Maximum violence was used at the command of the Government in order to suppress the people, but they carried on, and are still resolved to carry on, the struggle till they have played their full part and reached the goal. There were *hartals* and large-scale demonstrations on the 9th August and later, in all the towns of Maharastra. Colleges and schools in Poona, Sholapur, Nasik, Ahmednagar and Satara were closed down. The boys in their thousands participated in the demonstrations.

## POONA

A huge students' demonstration in front of the Parsuram Bhao College was fired upon. The crowd of demonstrators, faced with the bullets, began to thin down. The police chased the people running for the safety of their lives, and made *lathi*-charge upon them. Doctors were not allowed to give medical aid to them. Hundreds of persons were thus injured, but the people continued faithfully to carry on the programme of the movement. *Lathi*-charge and firings continued for many days. After some days the students, after hoisting the national flag in the Shivaji Mandir, marched in a procession, but had to face a volley of bullets and received *lathi* blows,

as a result of which a large number of them were injured. In the dead of night the infuriated people attacked police *Chaukis* and *thanas* but were again fired upon. Two were killed and several injured.

The police had occupied the Congress houses and public buildings. The local youth felt humiliated at this so they, in their thousands, pressed against the armed police cordon and tried to break it. The police resorted to *lathi* charges and firing to disperse them. After two days Poona City was left under military control. Many a time did the military resort to indiscriminate firing and remained in the city for full four days. The terror-stricken people desisted from manifesting open hostility towards the administration and many valiant fighters went underground.

Thus, a secret organisation of spirited workers was formed to conduct the movement and to keep it alive. The acts of sabotage and destruction of state property began to be more numerous and frequent. Of all these violent incidents the explosion of a bomb in the premises of the Capital cinema is most important, because the cinema was the rendezvous of the Tommies. Five Tommies were killed. One ammunition godown near Poona was set ablaze, involving the loss of over one crore of rupees.

It was believed that all the ammunition for conducting such a violent and deadly activity came from the military godown of Kirky. The soldiers and military officers were alleged to be secretly sympathetic towards the movement. 25 persons of this factory were later involved and consequently arrested in connection with the Maharashtra Conspiracy Case. The Movement could not be prolonged in Poona for a longer duration. Still, all credit for the success of the movement in Poona goes to the brave students of locality. At about 30 to 40 places telephone and telegraph wires were tampered with and sabotage activities were on the increase in October 1942. During this month more than 125 persons were arrested in Poona District and sentenced to varying terms of imprisonment. 40 persons were detained under the Defence of India Act.

### EASTERN AND WESTERN KHANDESH

The movement was conducted in not a very organised manner in Eastern and Western Khandesh but in

some of the parts of Eastern Khandesh, particularly in Nandubar East the movement gathered great momentum and had a very wide scope. On 7th September a procession, consisting wholly of school students, was taken out. While it was passing peacefully through streets and byelanes, the police started a general beating. This was followed by an order to fire. The boys ran into houses. A sub-Inspector chased them with his rifle and fired at those who could not find shelter. He also rushed at a few girls, but instantly a young boy holding national flag in his hand stood in front of him, lay bare his chest, and asked the officer to take an aim at him. The sub-Inspector shot at the boy but missed. The boy asked him to try again. The sub-Inspector, not trusting himself, asked the soldiers to hold the boy and then fired two shots. The boy fell dead on the ground. The sub-Inspector then entered a hotel and shot another boy. Altogether 4 boys were killed and 17 injured. None of these boys was over 17 and some of them were only 10 years of age. No medical aid was allowed to them. In fact, even those who looked sympathetically towards the boys were fired at. A pleader was passing alone in a tonga, and since he was wearing khadi he was dragged down, whipped and arrested. Several police Patils tendered their resignations being unable to tolerate the autocratic bestiality any longer.

In Eastern Khandesh, there is an Amil-meyer area; it was there that the Movement spread far and wide. This is the area which provided many kisan and labour leaders to Maharashtra. Sain Guruji hails from these parts. The people organised their own *morchas* in these parts and young women and girls lent their full co-operation to their male kins. Dr. Uttam Patil, born of a kisan family, was the leader of this Morcha. His wife, Shrimati Leela Patil, played her full role in the movement, and was arrested in connection with sabotage activities and sentenced for six years. But she escaped from police custody and continued her activities. Dr. Uttam Patil was also arrested in 1944, but like his wife he fled away and continued organising guerilla warfare.

In Amlanpur the people organised a strong well-fortified Morcha in which about 3,000 persons participated. They gave a tough fight to the police and struggled to hoist the Congress flag over many police stations, post-offices, railway stations and taluqa kutcheries. Many persons were arrested and firing was resorted to. The

organised form of the movement began to wither away, and was transformed into guerilla warfare, for which these parts were geographically well suited.

### NASIK

After the arrest of the leaders there was a complete *hartal* in the town and large scale demonstrations were a daily occurrence. The people attacked and disarmed the police when the latter came to arrest some congressmen. The Government retaliated by terrorising them on a very large scale, and for some days semi-martial law was established in Nasik. Organised efforts were made by the exasperated people to cut telephone and telegraph wires, to burn post offices and to dislodge the railway lines. Collective fines were imposed by the Government.

In Nasik district processions, meetings, picketting and other demonstrations were daily occurrences. The small bridges on the Sinnarth-Thagaon Road were blown off during the Gandhi week. On the 3rd of November a police *chauki* on the Agra Road in Nasik District was burnt. About 100 feet long rails had been laid down for the trollies to move, but since police officers were being trained in shooting, all these and trollies were removed and thrown into the river on 5th November.

### AHMEDNAGAR

Similar demonstrations and mass-meetings were held in Ahmednagar City and the district. A proclamation was issued by the District Magistrate calling upon Sjt. Achut Rao Patwardhan to surrender himself before the 5th of September. An attempt was made to burn the District Magistrate's residence, but as it was a stone building only the doors, windows and a few sheds could be burnt. On the 30th August there was a flag salutation ceremony. About a dozen persons were arrested in Koper Gaon and Sheo Gaon Taluqas for wires being tampered with over and again. The authorities found it impossible to restore communications. There were explosions in the office of the District Magistrate, Modern High School and the Girls High School. The schools were temporarily closed down. Many house-searches were made including those of a doctor and two military contractors.

## SOLAPUR DISTRICT.

On the 13th August when the flag salutation ceremony was being held at Solapur proper a few Anglo-Indian sergeants made a *lathi* charge on the crowds, resulting in injuries to three youngmen. The next day, as the people awoke, the office of the sub-Inspector of police was flying a national flag.

More than 50 persons were arrested in the district and there were about 10 bomb explosions in different parts of the city. The vigorous Corn Campaign bore no fruit in the villages of Solapur. Though the merchants bought 2 thousand bags of food-stuffs in the weekly bazars at Karmala, the coolies refused to load corn, insisting that the grain could not go out of the villages.

## COLABA DISTRICT

About 80 persons were arrested in October 1942. On the 30th August a police *Chauki* at Pyanad was burnt. In the first week of the movement three telegraph poles between Wangai and Badalpur were dislodged and thrown into the river. The telegraph wires over a distance of about four furlongs were removed, rails were taken off from the track between Naral and Wangai stations in broad daylight. All the police stations between Amdi Vali and Kadav were burnt. An electric tower near Wangai station was brought down as a result of which the mills in Bombay had to stop working for about 3 hours. The Government of Bombay imposed a collective fine of Rs. 33,000 on Mohad and Colaba districts.

## MOHAD CITY AND DISTRICT

On the morning of 10th August the people in the Mohad Taluqa marched towards the Mohad City. They met a bus in which some Government officials were travelling. The bus was stopped and the officials forced to put on Gandhi caps and lead the procession. Later on, when the procession reached the city the post office was raided and partly destroyed. A batch of police-men arrived. They too were made to form part of the procession, which then proceeded towards the treasury. A fresh party of police-men arrived. They opened fire but the procession moved on. Two students and four

other persons were killed and many injured. The police-men were then disarmed by the people. A third police party arrived and the crowd was once again fired upon. Then came an aeroplane, and high explosive bombs were dropped on the people. Some police-men were also injured. The head clerk, who was leading the procession, succumbed to his injuries.

### THANA DISTRICT

Nearly 80 persons were arrested during August 1942. On the second day, near Wade, nearly 15,000 peasants encircled the police station and captured some of its premises. On the same day when the prisoners in the Thana Jail were holding a flag hoisting ceremony the Jail police made a severe *lathi* charge on them for refusing to be locked in the barracks. Several prisoners were seriously injured. The peasants in the Pal Ghar Taluqa violated the forest laws and the electric towers of Tete Electrical Company were uprooted. There was a derailment between Palghar and Boisar. Nearly 22 bogies were derailed, out of which 8 were completely smashed. The Railway track was out of use for more than 5 days.

### RATNAGIRI DISTRICT

On the 30th August the Deputy Superintendent of police, along with 2 sub-Inspectors and 50 police-men, went to Jaitapore to bring the situation under control. There was complete boycott of all the Government officials and the people refused to obey even a highly placed Government official. These officials could not get even vegetables, rice and other articles of daily use for themselves. A police force had to flee when about five persons armed with *lathis* attacked them in the dead of night, even though the people were threatened with evil consequences if they took out any procession.

### SATARA DISTRICT

Satara, the metropolitan city of the Maratha Empire, has a rich heritage in Maratha history. It is the proud home of the Marathas. Physically, the district is a well-carved administrative unit of the Bombay Presidency. It stretches eastward from the Western Ghat, bounded

by the River Nira on the north and by the river Varna in the south. 90% of the population of Satara District is scattered over its 1200 villages. The people are mostly small peasant proprietors. The urban population, which is not more than one lakh, is divided in six towns, including Satara.

Since 1930, when there was a peasant revolt in Bilashi and other villages the Satara Congress has become a peasants' Congress—a real mass organisation.

On the morning of 9th August, the news of the arrest of the national leaders was disclosed to the people. It opened a new chapter in the freedom struggle. Satara too had its part to play. When the Congress workers, who had gone to attend the A.-I.C.C. meeting in Bombay returned to their district, they saw quite a different picture from what they had seen when they left for Bombay. The populace was in a rage. The people saw a challenge from the Government in the arrest of the leaders. They felt that they must do something. In the first week of August the people and the workers went from village to village. The villagers gathered in hundreds to hear them, in spite of the ban on public meetings. At least one hundred such gatherings were held in the southern part of the district in the first four nights.

Workers in the Kirloskar Iron works went on a spontaneous strike. The factory had to be completely closed for one month. That was a grand beginning. The Satara Congressmen, who returned from the Bombay A.-I. C. C., were looked upon by the peasants as pilgrims. The villagers would approach them to enquire, what Gandhiji had said in the A.-I.C.C. meeting? 'How was he looking?' 'Has he grown older?' And finally, with tears in their eyes, they would ask 'why was he arrested?' The whole atmosphere was thus surcharged with deep emotion.

### THE PEACEFUL MORCHAS

The feeling of resentment found expression in peaceful demonstrative *morchas* to taluqa kucheris. There were as many as five successful *morchas* at an appointed time from different directions. Peasants would assemble, hoist tri-colour flags, their leader would read out to them the August resolution, a few speeches would be made and then there was flag salutation ceremony. In a triumphant mood they would march back. They were the demonstrative *morchas*. From 24th August to 10th September, i.e.

in the second fortnight after the ninth August, five such *morchas* were led into different taluqas. The first march was upto the Karad Kutcheri under the leadership of Shri Balkrishna Patil of Undale on the 24th August. The second was on Patan Kucheri, the third on Tasgaon on the 3rd of September. This march stands unique in the history of the struggle. The demonstrators, numbering about four thousand, marched up the streets of Tasgaon like a well-disciplined army. Everybody was feeling that the people's *raj* was around the corner. The demonstrators were masters of the situation. They would have done whatever they liked. They could have captured Kutcheris. But there was a feeling of restraint and enough sense of discipline. They knew that Gandhiji would be pained very much in his heart if they resorted to violence and so after the triumphant flag salutation they marched peacefully back. The fourth march was to the Vadui Kutcheri under the leadership of Parsuram Garg of Bhadgaon and the last and fifth one on the Islampur Kutcheri where a clash occurred between the police and the mob.

The police *raj* that followed the firings at Vaduj and Islampur is a tale of woes. More than 1500 persons were jailed. Nearly one hundred were proclaimed as 'absconders'. Rewards of some thousands of Rupees were offered for their arrests. Relatives and wives of some these absconders were put under arrest and indecently interrogated? The police hunted for Nana Patil who had become the hero of Satara. The third degree treatment of the under-trials known as 'soondrie' became an every day affair.

The criminal elements of the district took advantage of this situation. The standing army of criminal absconders was already there. Many of them were said to be absconders of 20 years' standing. Now, determined to assert themselves, they made organised efforts to spread their sphere of influence. The number of dacoities in this period was perhaps the highest for the last decade. The Police did not afford any protection to the people. The tense economic situation, aggravated by the faulty scheme of foodgrains collection introduced in 1943 added to the difficulty of the people. It was at this time that under-ground workers, who were never isolated from the people, moved amongst them like fish in water, as they were from the people and for the people: the people's distress was their own distress.

Satara was haunted by the police. Some 1500 special police patrolled the villages of the district. The Military had been placed at four places in the district. In one month alone the district was forced to pay some Rs. 65,000/- as collective fines. There was a ban on freedom of speech, and about five hundred persons were put in the jail. Police Patils of about 80 villages tendered their resignations.

### 3—GUJERAT

#### SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

Gujerat is the province known for its cold, calculating and peaceful trading nature. This is, however, past history. The modern Gujerat is a creation of Mahatma Gandhi and is imbued and saturated with Gandhism: what we can call truth, non-violence, discipline and dignity. Under his remarkable leadership, Gujerat has undergone marvellous change and has given to Mahatma Gandhi his greatest and ablest disciple, Sardar Vallabhai Patel, the hero of Bardoli. Gujerat still calculates and trades but it has learnt to cast off fear to some extent, and is in no mood to take insult and injustice lying down. It has developed a sense of self-respect and learnt to guard it. It has given a good account of itself during the fight of 1942. It has not submitted meekly and tamely to the insults of arrogant rulers.

The open revolt of 1942 did not find in Gujerat a strange and amateur province. Indeed, all the movements started under Mahatma Gandhi's leadership were started from Gujerat. It is this Province, the homeland of Mahatma Gandhi, that was made his laboratory in experimenting the science of truth, non-violence, and Civil Disobedience. On his return to India in 1915 from South Africa he opened an Ashram in Ahmedabad and started giving training in a new cult and philosophy to his people. It was Khera District of this Province which was first to start a 'no-rent' campaign. Shortly after it tens of thousands of industrial labourers of Ahmedabad rose in revolt against the capitalists under Gandhiji's direct guidance, and for the first time discerned the great force and power of unity, and established the greatest Labour Union, called Mazdoor Mahajan Sangh. It is the greatest because the labourers had been successful in winning the sympa-

thies and cooperation of their employers, and for the first time, in an age of industrial conflicts capital and labour marched forward hand in hand. When India expressed its opposition to Rowlatt Act Gujarat did it in a unique way again under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi. The Bardoli Satyagraha has gone down in the history of India as the greatest Kisan Movement; very well organised, perfectly non-violent and completely successful. The historic March conducted by Mahatma Gandhi in 1930 and 1931 perfected the freedom's soldiery, in the art and the technique of non-violent warfare and Civil Disobedience Movement. I am alluding to the famous Dandi March.

It is needless to make a historical review of the culture and civilisation of Gujarat, and the mental and spiritual attainments of the Gujaratis. There is some truth in the theory of "greater Gujarat" propounded by Sjt. K.M.Munshi and others, though I have still very grave doubts about its racial aspects. So far as its cultural aspect is concerned there is no doubt that Gujarat once was the cradle of a neo-Aryan civilisation and culture.

The Province of Gujarat consists of five districts, viz. Surat, Khera, Baroch, Ahmedabad and panchmahal. The economic position of this province is very sound. The Districts of Surat, Khera and Baroch lay stretched in a very fertile land and Ahmedabad is one of the greatest centres of trade and commerce in India. Panchmahal is comparatively poor but the kisans of all these districts and the industrial labourers of Ahmedabad and the other towns of the province are very well advanced culturally, and are politically alert and very conscious. It is they who have formed the back-bone of all the political movements in the province. To them Mahatma Gandhi and Sardar Patel represent in their personalities their own crystallised hopes, aspirations and ideals. The entire body of Gujaratis is devoted to Mahatma Gandhi. Even the two lakhs of Bhils who form a portion of the province have not lagged behind and have marched forward shoulder to shoulder with their other compatriots of the province.

## THE 9TH AUGUST

The whole Gujarat was full of bitterness and remorse as it learnt of the arrest of the Congress leaders and Mahatma Gandhi. They took this humiliation to be their own, they took the sufferings of their beloved leaders to be their own sufferings and resolved to punish the

tyrant. In Gujerat as elsewhere the Government began the attack by effecting the mass arrests of the Congress workers without trial; simultaneously with this round up it issued orders banning all public meetings and processions, and resorted to *lathi*-charges and firings to punish those who sought to break these orders.

The events of the first two or three weeks after 8th August, and in fact of the period till the end of the year, can only be understood if the various factors that contributed to determine the psychology of the people are taken into account. In the back-ground was the atmosphere of the war and the phase of defeats for the Allies which it was passing through. Gandhiji never meant that the "Quit India" Campaign should be started at the moment merely to force the hands of an embarrassed Britain. In fact, he had explained day in and day out that he had asked the British 'to quit' so that India could take her due share in the war on the side of the Allies. The Government seemed determined, despite all the good attempts made by Mahatma Gandhi and the Congress to arrive at a peaceful solution of the Indian problem, to destroy the Congress and all that Gandhiji has built up during the last 25 years. It deprived the people of all its leaders at a stroke and it wished and expected to crush the people and its spirit by all the means at its disposal. It has to be said to the credit of the people that they resisted the Government as best as they could. All Gujeratis refused to be cowed down and to be crushed. In fact, they behaved in a way which no one had expected; and the result is that while the nerve of the Government has broken, the nerve of the people, shaken for a time, has been completely restored.

## THE FIGHT BEGINS

In the absence of any specific instructions as to what was to be done, the suggested programme of the sabotage had its own appeal. There was much to do and everybody wanted to do something, if not to die at the hands of the ruthless enemy. This 'doing' involved so many things which the people had never done before, and therefore had its peculiar romantic appeal. The young men of Gujerat had never before for generations known what it was to play with danger, if not actually with death, and here was an opportunity. So the young men and women, the students and even children, left their schools and

colleges and tried to do what they could inspite of the danger. In all that was done there was much of the ridiculous, much of the enthusiastic, and much even of the quixotic. It could not be expected to be otherwise.

The movement in Gujerat began with general strikes which lasted from 3 days or a week in many places, to a month in Nadiad and three months and a half in Ahmedabad. During the general strikes the people showed great discipline. Although Ahmedabad and other towns were already full of police men since 6th and 7th August, 1942, orders of the Congress workers were implicitly and readily obeyed. This was evidenced by observing a "no traffic day" when no citizen except the Congress Traffic Controllers moved about.

### POLICY OF REPRESSION

To frighten the villagers into not helping those who transgressed the law and broke rules and regulations framed by the Government, to trample upon the rights of citizenship, they imposed heavy collective fines on the villages. The Government feared that the people might not only resent the payment of collective fines but might even launch a no-tax campaign. Hence, in order to terrorise the people, they gathered the collective fines, as well as the revenue in some cases, literally at the point of the bayonet. A village was cordoned off by the armed police in the early hours of the morning and no one was allowed to enter or leave the village on any account. Parties of armed police then went from house to house and collected the fines and the revenue. This happened especially in some of the villages in the Bardoli and Jalalpore Talukas of the Surat District. In the District of Khera and Baroch, revenue was not collected on the village 'Chaura' as usual, but groups were formed of 10 to 15 villages and the people of the villages of a group had to go to a selected village where revenue was collected under police protection. All this was done, for the Government feared that national guerillas might loot the revenue.

### STUDENTS

Glorious was the role played by the students in the movement of 1942. They took part in it with a zest and enthusiasm which they had never shown before. Next to the general strike in importance was the boycott of

the schools and colleges, which lasted from a few weeks to a few months in many places, to as many as six months in the schools and colleges of Ahmedabad, Surat and Baroda. These students who boycotted their schools and colleges did not sit idle. Their greatest contribution to the struggle was the almost daily breach of the undemocratic, tyrannical and arrogant orders, banning meetings and processions that sought to suppress the civil liberties of the people. This happened in all the cities and towns of *Gujarat*. So well did they do their work that the Government appeared foolish and helpless in its attempts to enforce its authority. Several students died a martyr's death in the cause of the freedom of their country, and earned immortal fame.

## TWO EXAMPLES

(1) On the 10th August when a procession of students marched towards the Gujarat College in Ahmedabad waving flags and shouting slogans a posse of police came, belaboured the girl students, bodily lifted them, threw them over the hedges and opened fire; A young boy, Vinod Kinariwala, came forward, shouting 'shoot me, my breast is open'. The police officer advanced and fired at him dropping him dead,

(2) Rasik Jani, Pushpa Badan, Gobardhan Shah and Himmat Lal Kadia paid the price of their heroism by death, in braving the atrocities of a tyrannical alien rule, and will serve forever as beacon lights to fighters for freedom. Theirs was a haloed martyrdom.

The students prepared bulletins, handbills giving the message of Congress, leaflets with Gandhiji's parting message and the programmes of the movement, and distributed them throughout the province, travelling ticketless from place to place, village to village and explaining them to the people. Numerous were the girl and boy fighters who did their best, and fought heroically in the vindication of their country's honour.

## MUNICIPAL BOARDS

The municipalities and local boards did not fail to make their contributions to the fight. About 90% of these boards and other committees were in the hands of the Congress. They passed resolutions endorsing and supporting the A.I.C.C. Resolution of August 1942. The

Municipalities of Ahmedabad and Surat and several local boards and school boards remained suspended for many months and years. Apart from this, in Ahmedabad several municipal officers staged a stay-out-strike and refused to do their work. Several of them are out of service on that account. Many other especially teachers resigned their jobs.

## SABOTAGE ACTIVITIES

As elsewhere, under the impact of severe repressive measures adopted by the Government to stifle and strangle the national aspirations of the country, the vital life-line of this great open rebellion of 1942, the people soon stopped making organised, disciplined and peaceful attacks on the symbols of Governmental authorities and police. They took to sabotage activities.

Attacks on communication were not as numerous as in Bihar and U.P., but the stage had been well planned and well-executed. There were cutting off of telegraph wires over several miles near Baroda and Surat, and in Kathiawar 2 or 3 derailments, one near Palghar and the other near Kalol R.M. Railway. Two stations were burnt, one Timbarva in T.V. line, and another Amalsad along the main line of B. B. & C. I. Rly. There were two train hold-ups, one on 19th May, 1944 and the other on the 9th May 1945, when the R. M. S. was looted and the post burnt.

In the Khera District more than 30 postal runners were waylaid and their bags looted and burnt, and once a mail coach running between Khera and Mehmabad was waylaid and burnt. This was done with the idea of dislocating the postal system.

## AHMEDABAD

### *The Stalingrad of India*

Ahmedabad can easily be compared with Stalingrad of Russia. It was in Ahmedabad that an effective republican Government worked for some days and orders of the city Governor were obeyed even by the police and other officials. In the early hours of the morning of the 9th August, 17 prominent leaders were arrested. This was

quickly followed by occupation of the local Congress-house. All telephone communications were cut by the administration to keep the city ignorant of what the police was doing. An order prohibiting the assembly of more than 5 persons was promulgated without any loss of time. All the precautionary measures, however, proved utterly futile and unavailing. Thousands of citizens gathered, formed into a procession, and marched through the city. There was complete *hartal*. The workers left their factories and joined the demonstrations. The Mazdoor Mahajan Sangha declared its intention of continuing the *hartal infinitum*. The Broker's Association also decided in favour of complete *hartal*. Students in their thousands left their colleges and schools, and joined the strikers in organising protest meetings, and taking out processions.

The general strike of Ahmedabad was unique, and became the glorious episode of the struggle. All the mills, bazars and factories remained closed for the entire period, and all the attempts of the Government agents and officers to break it proved utterly futile. A large measure of the honour for the general strike goes to the labourers who sacrificed their wages for this period and underwent untold hardships to make it a success. The strike would have continued a couple of months longer if some selfish and officious mill-agents had not made active efforts to sabotage it.

The police made free use of *lathis* to break up meetings and processions. Some processionists were arrested, but the people had shed all fear and stood firm like a rock. The police opened fire. Umakant Kadya, a young man, was the first to die in the freedom's battle in Ahmedabad. The police forces finding it unable to cope with the situation requisitioned military force to their aid. By night fall the troops were stationed in all parts of the City.

On 10th August a meeting was held, which was sought to be broken by the police. Several volleys of tear-gas were discharged. An order was promulgated to the effect that anybody who assaulted or injured any soldier or police man would be shot dead. On the 10th morning processions were organised in different wards which the police tried to disperse with free use of *lathis*. The entire population stopped work. The mills were completely closed. In the evening a big procession of students marched towards the Gujarat College waving flags and shouting

slogans. I have already referred to this incident in connection with the valour and patriotism displayed by Vinod Kanariwala. After his death a *lathi* charge was made by the police on the demonstrators in which a large number of students was injured. The police then entered the hostel and indiscriminately beat the boarders. One Mani Patel was shot in the thigh and thumb. Though the students could not reach the Congress House and hoist the national flag, they were joined by a large number of students from other schools and colleges. This growing number of the student demonstrators terrified the police. The situation had gone out of their control. About 700 soldiers were then employed to disperse the crowd who made very severe and relentless *lathi* charges.

On the 10th or 12th of August the students brought into being what is known as unity committee, which decided to publish a Daily. The province of Gujerat was divided into 8 parts and for every part students were appointed by the student Sangha to propagate the views of the Congress through literature produced by themselves, or by speeches.

On the 11th there were still bigger preparations on the part of the Government to crush the movement. There was a display of tanks and machine guns to terrify the people. The police entered bye-lanes and belaboured men, women and children. Even the old were not spared. Mill owners too had their share. The mills, markets, schools and colleges remained closed. The struggle entered upon an intensive phase with the sabotage of communications and the burning down of police stations at several places. Shootings became the order of the day. Ahmedabad was virtually under Martial Law.

On the 12th the police opened fire twice on the demonstrators near the Rly. Station. A cinema house was occupied by the military, to be used as a place of operations against the people. The police also forcibly broke open the doors and gates of many 'poles' where military pickets were stationed. The people retaliated with yet more sabotage of telephone and telegraph wires. Posters were pasted on walls discountenancing violence. Meetings and processions continued to be held.

The situation of Ahmedabad city is favourable for secret and guerrilla war against authorities. It is like a well-fortified fort. The whole city is divided into many

'poles' and in every 'pole' about two to three thousand people can hold meetings quite undetected. Moreover, there are many other safe hiding places. Even during those days of military control preceded by ruthless repressive policy adopted by the Government, the people stood on the roofs of their houses to shout Congress slogans giving much annoyance to the police and military, and much to their dismay. Youngmen and women, students, labourers and brokers deserved all credit for successful running of the movements in cities and towns of Ahmedabad. No less significant part was played by the industrial magnates and tradesmen of Ahmedabad city, who met with indecent and humiliating behaviour from the military and police, but still continued sympathising with the movement. The people and the police continued provoking and terrorising each other for a considerable time.

### ARRESTS

The arrest of workers was almost a daily occurrence in Ahmedabad city. Almost everyday lorries full of such workers would run from the city and take the workers to unknown destinations. In the beginning about 2 to three hundred arrests were made daily, the incidence of young men and women being greater. Some of them were released from police *chaukis* and others suffered sentences of varying terms. 1,057 persons were arrested, 397 were detained and 430 were imprisoned.

### TOWARDS VILLAGES

Ahmedabad had the credit and pride of being the storm centre of this Movement in the Gujerat Province. It enjoyed the privilege of providing organisational skill, leadership, and other essentials of a political revolution, to the whole Province. About 500 students had taken a solemn vow that they would stake everything and do everything for the freedom of their motherland. True to their pledge, they remained with and in the movement throughout. They went to villages, districts and states with the message of the Congress and the programme of the Movement, and engaged themselves in propaganda work for the insurgents. As elsewhere, the Movement soon lost its fury and ferocity and the people ostensibly took to the former peaceful routine of life, but in every village they had fixed some days when they would assemble

together and reiterate their faith in the Congress leadership, condemned the Government for its inhuman acts, and endorsed once again the 'Quit India' Resolution. It was the student community, coming to them from the cities, which gave to the rural folk much of their courage and determination.

The students and mill-workers continued the strike for many months. The textile mill-workers remained on strike for  $3\frac{1}{2}$  months; Municipal and other boards for 4 months; the towns and markets remained closed for 4 months; and the Press did not function for many days. The people received *lathi* charges almost every day. The Police opened fire about 20 times. On every 9th of August for full  $2\frac{1}{2}$  years there were demonstrations and *lathi*-charges. The young between the age of 15 and 25 years, formed the bulk of those who participated in the Movement. About 12 persons died and 25 persons were admitted in the hospital. This excludes the number of those persons who went for private treatment. Attacks were made on Government institutions and buildings at 12 places viz. Daskaoi, Mamladar-office, the Government store of levy grain at village Sarbhan of Vagra taluka, 'Chauras' or 'Chauris' in nearly all the districts of Gujerat, specially the Jalalpur taluka of Surat District, a judicial court, police city headquarters, small post-offices, temporary police *chaukis*, and permanent ones like the police stations at Veduch in Jambusar taluka and Ambalipur station in Panchmahal. Municipal schools, electricity stations, medical hospitals, railway bridges, municipal buildings and bungalows of police sub-Inspectors. In all these places the police stations were robbed of all rifles and cartridges that were in the station. It was, however, to be noted that in all these cases not the smallest article of private property was touched. The attacks on these police stations resulted, it is reported, in the closing down of all small police stations in Baroch District for several months.

### TELL-TALE FIGURES

#### (1) SABOTAGE

- (a) Five electricity stations.
- (b) Queen Victoria Statue.
- (c) Medical School Hostel.
- (d) Ghan Kamta Police Chauki.

- (e) Elis Bridge Police Chauki.
  - (f) Prem Darban Police Chauki.
  - (g) Manu Bomb Case.
  - (h) Pipardi Pole Bomb Case.
  - (i) Government Labour Welfare Centre.
- Apart from these bombs exploded at 10 other places.

## (2) *DERAILMENTS*

Three attempts were made to derail trains.

## (3) *WIRE-CUTTING*

Wires were cut off at several places including 20 mills, Government workshops, and A.R.P. Offices.

## (4) *LOOTING*

Some lorries which were carrying military goods were looted.

## KHERA DISTRICT

Arrests	...	299
Detentions	...	102
Convictions	...	171

There were three cases of flogging.

Khera is a very important district. It has a fertile land. Many people belonging to this district trade outside the district. Occurrences at Ahmedabad became pointers to the people of this district. They knew what fate awaited them and how they should meet the challenge thrown by the Government. The textile mills remained closed for many days as did the Ahmedabad Mills, and in every important town or village schools and colleges remained closed for a number of days, and complete *hartal* was observed in many markets. The residents of Ananda demonstrated the greatest power, courage and fortitude by not permitting those who catered to the military needs in Bombay and elsewhere to move out with their articles. For months the military personnel had to go without milk and butter.

## *LATHI CHARGES*

*Lathi* charge in towns and villages became almost a daily feature. Almost every village had its share, but

Nadiad, Anand, Kapadwanj, Dakor, Umreth, Borsad, Dabhan and Chaklasi were conspicuous for the notorious behaviour of the police. The police had neither any excuse nor any reason, still they indulged in stupidities and made very cruel *lathi* charges. It seems that the police had received instructions to that effect from the higher authorities, who were bent on crushing the spirits of the people.

### FIRING

Firing was resorted to sixteen times. In Nadiad Dakor, Adas, Chaklasi, Bhadran, Karamsad the tragedies caused by the firing were more numerous. Of these Adas and Dakor were more noteworthy.

### ADAS FIRING

Adas, in Khera district, will always remain in the memory of the people because the amount of innocent blood shed at this place was the greatest. I am singling out Adas and Dakor because they afford the best instances of the ruthlessness of the alien rule, as well as the disciplined cool-courage and fearless spirit of the resisting students in vindication of their country's cause.

On the 17th of August a party of 50 students who had gone on a propaganda mission from Baroda and Anand were hurrying towards Adas Station after their work to catch the evening train for Baroda. Just as they were passing through a narrow lane to reach the station a party of 4 or 6 policemen armed with rifles, who had set out in their pursuit, got out of the train and went to intercept them. On reaching the party of the students they asked them to stop and sit down. The students did what they were asked to do. They thought that the policemen would either beat them with *lathis* or would arrest them. The policemen then deliberately shot at them, keeping the barrels of their guns close to their chests. The bullets passed through two or three men. Four students died on the spot and 12 were wounded, of whom one died later in the hospital. Not only did the police kill these five men but were so brutal that they would not allow water being supplied to the wounded, nor did they arrange for any medical aid or any other facilities for them. Thus they lay from 7 P.M. to 12 P.M. when the *Faujdar* arrived. He handed over the dead bodies to the people and removed the wounded to the Anand

Hospital. A suit was filed against those who were wounded. That is the British justice.

### DAKOR FIRING

Dakor firing was even more callous, soul-moving and heart-rending than the Adas firing. The police opened fire near Ranchhodrai's famous temple. The crowd of people, completely un-armed and formed into a peaceful procession was indiscriminately fired at. Under the pressure of volleys of the fire the people scattered and ran into the lanes for safety. Still the police went on firing till they exhausted their ammunition. The tables were then turned and the people retaliated. Had it not been for the intervention of the late Chhota Bhai Mukhi, not a single police man would have been left alive to tell the tale. But the police was not slow to wreak vengeance and it was Sjt. Mukhi himself who was the first victim of police firing. It is noteworthy to record that he was shot near the police *thana*. For hours he lay unattended, and was then removed to the dispensary. Strangely enough, the man on the cot next to Sjt. Mukhi was a police man whom he had rescued from the jaws of death and the fury of the people. In all, 8 deaths took place and there is hardly any possibility of assessing the exact figure of those who were injured. The buildings which were attacked by the furious mob were:-

- (1) Nadiad Income-Tax Office.
- (2) Government House.
- (3) Police Chaukis.
- (4) Pipalav Chaura.
- (5) Delol Chaura.
- (6) Dharmaj High School.
- (7) Sojitra High School.

### SABOTAGE ACTIVITIES

- (1) Bomb activities particularly at Nadiad and Mehmabad.
- (2) Income-Tax Office at Nadiad set on fire.
- (3) Wire cutting at innumerable places.
- (4) Looting—75 postal bags were looted.

27 Post-offices were forced to be closed. Collective fines worth Rs. 10,000 were realised by the Government.

All district and Taluka Congress Committees were declared unlawful and their property confiscated. Only very recently was their property restored to these committees in a highly damaged condition.

### SURAT DISTRICT

Arrests	...	1281
detentions	...	376
Convictions	...	905
Demonstrations	...	Innumerable

*Hartals at* :— Textile Mills for 3½ months  
 Bazars for more than 2 months  
 Educational institutions for a year.

Firings were made very frequently at Jalalpur and Bardoli and *lathi*-charges almost everywhere. About 7 persons died of *lathi*-charge and the number of those who were injured cannot be ascertained. Surat is a very important district of Gujarat Province. It is a great industrial and commercial centre. The number of Muslims in this district is greater than that in other districts of Gujarat province. For various reasons the Muslims did not actively participate in the movement. That is why the movement was not a great success in this district. But in Surat proper the movement found many active participants and there were many activities connected with it. Partial *hartals* were organised and the students played a great role. There was a good deal of sabotage activity and the following Government buildings were attacked by the angry mobs:

(1) Police Chauras	30
(2) Post Offices	Many
(3) School buildings	Many
(4) Railway Stations	2 viz., Kisan and Timberva

Surat did not lag behind in sabotage activities. There were many cases of tampering with telegraph and telephone wires in Surat City and Jalalpure Taluka. Rails for considerable length were dislodged in Bardoli. So was done at Dipali in Jalalpur Taluka. For full nine months the programme of dislodging rails was pursued in Tapti Valley.

### COLLECTIVE FINES

About Rs. 1,65,350/- were realised as collective fines

in Surat District and in many places *goondas* were employed by the authorities for this purpose. All the Congress organisations were declared illegal and a ban was imposed on them. The Government took possession of all the *Ashrams*. Surat Municipality lent great help in promoting the struggle and as a reward it was suspended by the Government.

### BAROCH DISTRICT

Arrests	.....	171
Detentions	.....	19
Conviction	.....	72

These figures have been provided by the Government, but the fact is that many more arrests were effected.

The Movement was a great success in Jambusar *taluka* of District Baroch. The fury and intensity of this movement in this *taluka* can well be compared with the movement in Maharashtra. Sjt. Chhota Bhai Purani is the prominent leader of this place, who has faith in violence, and had organised the whole Movement in the region in accordance with his faith and ideals. Some of the young men and women of this region, therefore, took to violence under the leadership of Sjt. Purani and endeavoured to establish their own Government in the District. They made police *chaukis* and *thanas* the target of the attack. These people were erstwhile wrestlers, had their arenas, and were firm believers in violence and blood-shed, as a means of winning independence for the country. It was at this time that these youngmen had the cooperation of a famous rebel named Megzi. He is a strange rebel, and the people have many myths and anecdotes about him. The people of Baroch have great sympathy for him, for never did he in his career full of adventure and rebellion, plunder any poor man. He always robbed the rich of their riches and helped the poor and the needy. He can favourably be compared with Robin Hood and Sultana Bhantu. It was for this reason that these brave young men, under his leadership, made many attempts on the *thanas*. Their attacks were very vigorous and successful in many cases. Police men were disarmed. There are very scanty means of communications and transport, because Baroch is mainly a mountainous district. It, therefore, became a very hard thing for the police to trail up and arrest

Megzi, Chhota Bhai and their co-workers. They put on police uniform, ravaged many police *chaukis* and almost everywhere came out triumphant. For full three months the people lived like free men in these regions.

### PANCHMAHAL DISTRICT

Arrests	.....	283
Detentions	.....	31
Convictions	.....	244

After the arrests of the leaders, as elsewhere, many protest meetings were organised, processions were taken out and resolutions passed, condemning the Government for their onslaught on the Congress. The Students left schools and colleges and joined the people in expressing their resentment. Many traders and shop-keepers were arrested in this connection. The police had to open fire only once, when they were hunting for an absconder. There were many sabotage and dislocation activities in this district. The District office was burnt, bombs burst in the premises of two or three police *chaukis* in the Kalol Taluka, and rails removed near Shivraj Gaon. Obviously they wanted to hold in check the movement of trains bringing soldiers to suppress the Movement. A train was forced to move between Mansena and Kalol. Thousands of people participated in a fair that was held near Kalol, and lest some untoward incident should happen they brought with them spears and *lathis*. There was a clash between the people and the police. The women folk took part in the battle that ensued. In village Karonda some guerillas forced the policemen to put down their arms, for which the military sought full retaliation. The revenue office was burnt in Kalol, and there were regular skirmishes between the police and the guerillas in this region.

# BIHAR (STATISTICS)

135

<i>Names of places</i>	<i>No. of persons detained</i>	<i>No. of persons arrested</i>	<i>No. of persons sentenced</i>	<i>No. of persons killed</i>	<i>No. of persons wounded</i>	<i>Amount of collective fines</i>
Monghyr	54	927	388	89	35	1,97,700
Gaya	46	1,035	789	14	—	3,53,300
Hazari Bagh	328	13,310	7,001	533	669	1,77,200
Palamu	8	—	300	—	1,286	3,400
Ranchi	12	394	916	—	—	6,000
Manbhoomi	—	—	—	5	16	34,640
Singhbhoomi	25	175	272	—	—	2,164
Poornima	25	1,475	700	46	60	1,28,000
Bhagalpur	104	4,000	1,000	447	362	2,18,480
Saran	55	2,000	712	517	—	1,25,000
Muzaffarpur	60	100	300	50	100	3,69,000
Darbhanga	18	1,200	200	38	100	4,88,600
Champanan	17	2,008	700	22	55	1,03,350
Total	752	26,624	13,278	1,761	2,683	22,06,834

## CHAPTER IV

### BIHAR

#### SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

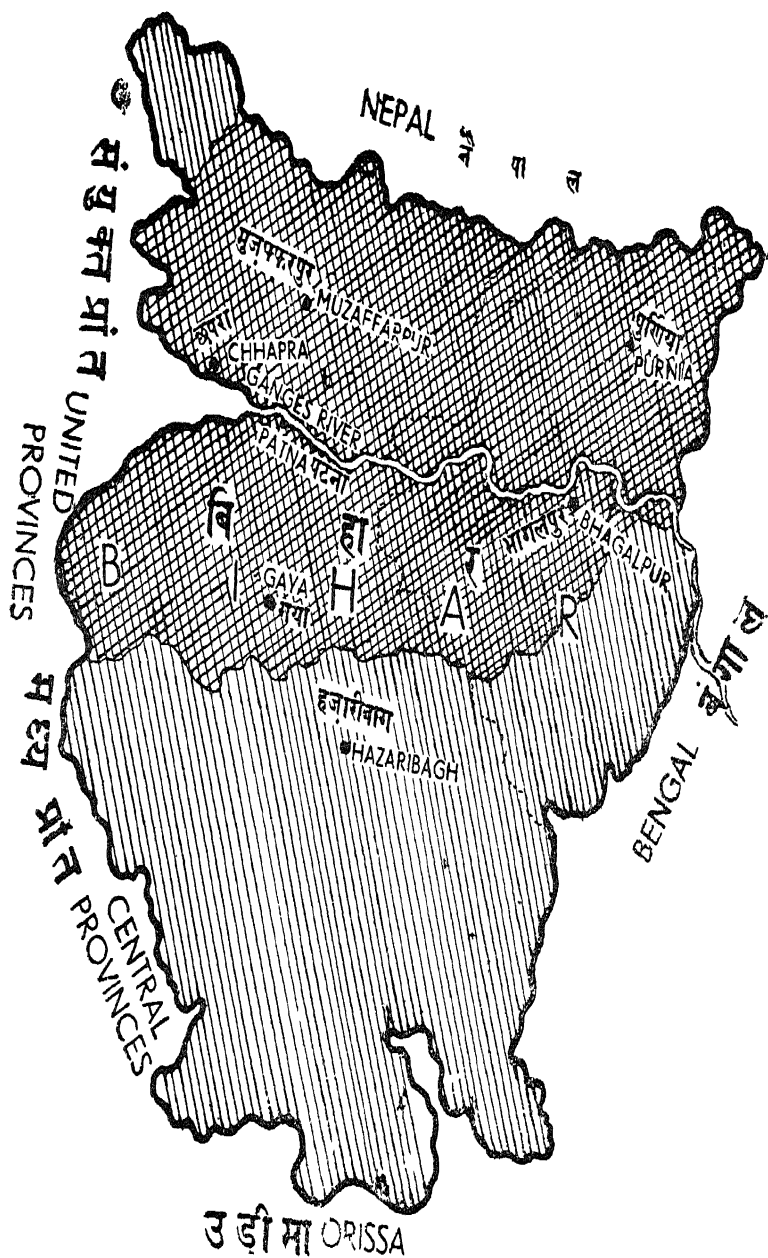
Bihar is known as the garden of India ; and rice, wheat, barley, jute and sugarcane are its chief crops. It is densely populated, therefore, tempo of life in this province is remarkably great. Bihar is the cradle of Buddhism. It was in this province that Lord Budha was born and it is here that he got wisdom. It was in this province that non-violence for the first time was taught by Lord Budha and practised, and made a state-policy by the Great Asoka, whose capital was Patliputra, the modern Patna. Coal, iron and mica are mined in this province and there are large iron and steel works and tobacco factories. Thus, in Bihar we get labourers coming from all the corners of India leading a joint and common life; and, under the leadership of Congress, Mahatma Gandhi and Rajendra Prasad, making a great contribution towards all freedom's battles.

The area of Bihar is 69,054 sq. miles ; and its population is about four crores comprising mostly of Hindus.

During the reign of the Great Asoka there was a network of Buddha-sanghas called *Bihars*. That is why the modern name of this province is Bihar. Like those good old days of yore, modern Bihar is full of Ashrams where people are trained in constructive work and village uplift.

Bihar has fought many freedom battles from times immemorial, and has given a lead to modern India at different times and on various matters. It has been the centre of gravity in Indian politics for many centuries, and many a time has it given the message of hope and liberty to the rest of India.

The Bihar of 1942 has made a remarkable history of its own. Every page of this history is full of individual and collective valour and courage ; the new spirit of sacrifice and service that has filled the head and heart of every Bihari; the heart-rending tale of repression; the loot and plunder of villages; the devastation wrought by the police and military; the molestation of women; *lathi* charges of innocent people, young and old, male and female; the ruthless firing and individual and united efforts





made by the people of Bihar to wrest power from unwilling hands of the foreigners.

The challenge thrown by the alien power in a most unwarranted manner was soon picked up by Bihar. The latter as a whole declared and plunged itself into an 'open rebellion' against the alien rule. In every village, in every modest home, in big cities, in palatial buildings, wherever a Bihari lived 'do or die,' the parting message of Mahatma Gandhi, was ringing. Bihar, as a huge body, rose up against the tyrant and was resolved to punish the offender and obliterate and cast off the national shame of slavery. All the factors and essentials of revolution had matured up in Bihar as elsewhere. A psychological tug-of-war was already going on between India and Britain. The breaking out of an open rebellion was a certainty. The logical conclusion of so greatly strained relations between two nations could only be an 'open rebellion' that actually commenced with the wholesale arrests of the beloved leaders of India on 9th August 1942.

The names 'Mahatma Gandhi' and 'Babu Rajendra-Prasad' are bywords in every home of Bihar. The Champaran Satyagraha had left behind many devoted adherents for Mahatma Gandhi and faithful soldiers for the Congress. Babu Rajendra Prasad, through his selfless services, the austerity of his life and the assistance which he rendered to the suffering millions during earthquake and natural cataclysms, as also the genius which he displayed in his organising capacity, won the affection of all Biharis. Sjt. Jai Prakash Narain, the living dynamo behind the under-ground activities connected with the 'open rebellion' of 1942 has in Bihar youth his great soldiery and admirers, specially in his home district of Saran. These factors added with others are responsible for the remarkably great success of the Movement in Bihar.

### CONGRESS LEADERSHIP

Bihar is primarily an agricultural province. The number of big cities is too few in this province. The population is evenly distributed all over the Province. The rural-folk by nature are simple, religious and honest. They are men and women of strong faith and have great capacity for constructive work. Almost all the Congress leaders of this province hail from the villages and have deep faith in Gandhiji's leadership. Although

the youth of Saran District and other neighbouring districts are under the influence of Shri Jai Prakash Narain, the Congress Socialist leader, yet the masses have not lost faith in Mahatma Gandhi. Their love of him has not waned. Dr. Rajendra Prasad is the connecting link between the masses of Bihar and the Congress. So long as he lives, and one can reasonably hope that for centuries even after his death, Bihar will always be with the Congress. So deep was the love of Bihar for Congress that it went almost mad with anger and bitterness when Mahatma Gandhi, Babu Rajendra Prasad and other Congress Leaders were arrested. They were all resolved to retaliate against those who had attacked the pride and prestige of the nation. It was for this reason that despite the appeal of Provincial and District Congress leaders to the contrary, the people openly took to violence and destructive activities.

### SHAPE OF THE MOVEMENT

The people were full of bitterness, anger, hatred and indignation. They wanted to demonstrate this universal spite and contempt for the British in a peaceful manner. They organised '*hartals*' in every public or private institution. Students, male and female, left their educational institutions and as a protest against the hurling insults and infliction of indignities on the nation, organised meetings and demonstrations which were joined by traders, industrialists and labourers. Processions were taken out, slogans were raised and speeches were delivered, strongly denouncing the show put up by the British rule. But they soon realised that no adequate expression could be given to their genuine anti-British feelings in that manner. They wanted something more to do, to show what and how they actually felt. But they had no cut and dried programme of action with them. It was at this time that Mr. L.S. Amery's broadcast became of immense value to the people. He gave the people the programme they sought. The people now took to the sabotage and dislocation activities. The leaders who could return from Bombay also told the people that the only way out through the impasse in Indian politics was to destroy all the vestiges of alien power in India. From August 13 and 14, in every village and town and city of Bihar brave and numerous efforts were made by the people to paralyse the Government machinery by cutting wires, removing rails, destroying bridges and getting control over state buildings and other institutions.

Over a thousand post offices were soon either under the control of the insurgents or burnt by them. In most of the villages therefore, there were no post offices for days together. Every village was protected and patrolled by volunteers. Some villages were so very well protected that the invading military or police had to think many times before they entered into villages. The people were well aware of and alive to the fact that some day or the other the forces of occupation would be let loose to suppress them. They had taken all precautions and had well armed themselves with all sorts of weapons in case they were made to face the invaders. Hindus and Muslims all joined together in the common task of the defence of the sanctity and liberty of their villages. They were all organising '*panchayats*' and endeavouring to restore peace. Many villages were attacked by the military but they put up an organised and peaceful defence. The people of Muzaffarpur faced the firing of the military with wooden shields, which they had prepared forestalling the impending calamity. In most of the villages they had planned to burn the military lorries by tying flambeau to bamboos.

Everywhere the movement ran with full rage, fret and fury, excepting the Santhal Parganas and Southern division consisting of Singhbhum, Manbhum, Hazaribagh etc. It is not meant that in these districts there were few sacrifices made by the people and less suffering was borne by them. The sacrifices and sufferings of the people of this region have entitled them to a glorious page in the history of India. What is really meant is to show that the speed and progress of the movement in the region was comparatively slow. Those who were living in eastern and western parts of Bihar rose in their thousands against the British and had their own share of the sufferings attending a mass revolution and taste of liberty which lasted only for a few days.

### SPECIAL FEATURES OF THE MOVEMENT

While reviewing this stupendous and remarkable human drama, one cannot lose sight of a few characteristic features of the movement. Throughout the province the Muslims of Bihar rubbed shoulders with their Hindu brethren, and suffered for and served the cause of the whole nation. They sweated, starved and shed their blood with their other compatriots. The number of arrested Muslims went as high as 250. The British and

the Indian bureaucracy did their best to create schism and communal bitterness among the rank and file of both the Hindus and the Muslims, and gave many allurements and enticing promises to the Muslims so that they could be weaned away from this mass-uprising but the Muslims true to their traditions, stuck to their guns and position they had taken up. They were told that the mass-uprising was nothing but a Hindu revolt, but the Muslims refused to believe it. They shunned those who wanted to mould them into traitors. Women-folk in their thousands, not only in cities and towns but also in villages, participated in the movement and bore cheerfully the sufferings and privations which fell to their lot during those grave days of August Revolution. There is not a single instance showing the loot and plunder of the private and personal property of the people, nor was precious human life unnecessarily lost.

### ATTACK ON JAILS

One is reminded of the great romance of the bombardment and fall of Bastille when one comes to narrate the tale of the movement in Bihar. Many prisons were attacked and prisoners set free. At Madhukani prisoners rose in revolt, caught hold of the superintendent and threw him behind the prison bars. All prisoners, except the politicals, fled away and two of them were caught later on. About 2,000 people attacked Hazipur jail and demolished its gates. About 1,000 prisoners made good their escape, including the politicals. Some of them were caught later on and rudely punished. They were seated and moved from place to place on the back of donkeys. A fine of Rs. 1,000/- was levied on them. At Sitamarhi a mob, 10,000 strong, surrounded and cordoned off the jail to force the release of their leader Th. Madan Singh. The police used tear gas but the mob continued laying siege to the last, and succeeded in hoisting tricolour on the jail. Jails at Ara and Gonda in Santhal Parganas were similarly attacked by the mob, and 700 and 100 prisoners were respectively released.

### STUDENTS

The students of Bihar played a vital role. Their youthful enthusiasm and untiring courage during this Movement has made them the real heroes of the nation. New ideals and ideology had filled every fibre of their being and every drop of their blood was boiling for violent

revolution. They marched in groups through lanes and by-lanes of the cities, markets and towns, shouting Congress slogans and delivering speeches. They volunteered themselves for propaganda work in the villages and instigated the populace to crush the tyrant. Retaliation, bloody or otherwise, was the key-note of their message to the people. They were full of spirit and courage, determination and resolve, hopes and ideals, and were capable of instilling a new life into the people. Their voice echoed through plains and meadows; wide extensive valleys and the beautiful plateaux. In most of the villages the police and the military had to bend to the wishes of the people, and on most of the public buildings and institutions tricolour was flown by the students. For the first time after many centuries the people breathed in the atmosphere of liberty, and it was the students who brought to them this noble experience of life.

### SABOTAGE

The activities of sabotage and dislocation were undertaken by people of Bihar at a comparatively later stage. When they saw that the British were all out to stay in India and were not prepared to leave its shores; and when they saw that British were using the full force of military and police, they embarked upon a programme of sabotage and dislocation. The Movement in the province entered a phase which was very important and decisive for Bihar. The police and military behaved no better than the Japs or German occupation forces. The people had not sufficient and adequate arms to give a determined and open fight to this army of occupation. The utmost that they could do was to create difficulties for the alien administration to move their forces in the country-side, for suppressing the people and breaking the back-bone of national life. Wires were cut, stations were burnt, all the means of communications were dislocated and dismantled. It happened at many places on different dates. At many places this part of the programme was a grand success. In the Eastern and Northern Districts of the province almost all the stations, except a few, were either burnt or damaged. Rails were removed over considerable distances. Such activities continued upto 15th September. For many days tickets were not available and the people moved from place to place with the same ticket. For days on end facilities for sending telegrams remained absent.

Some 80% of Police *thanas* were moved to district headquarters in Shahbad, Ara, Darbhanga, Champaran, Muzaffarpur, Bhagalpur, Patna, Munghyr, Purnia and other districts. At headquarters too the police officials could not have comfortable days. Jail courts ceased to function almost everywhere. For a number of days no vestige or sign of foreign domination could be traced. But such a situation, though seemingly happy, could not last long. Its spell at no place was more than 1½ months.

## LABOUR

Tatanagar and Dalmianagar are the two most important centres in Bihar. After the arrest of Congress leaders in Bombay, the labourers of Tatanagar, like their brethren elsewhere, were swept away by emotion, pathos and anger. They expressed the bitterness and agony of their heart by organising strikes in mills and taking out processions. On the 15th of August, 5 labour leaders, Shri M. John, Shri M. K. Ghosh, Shri T. P. Sinha, Shri N. C. Mukerji and Shri Neta Singh, were removed from their midst and imprisoned. Shri Neta Singh a Sikh youngman who was only 28 years old resorted to hunger-strike twice, as a protest against the high-handedness of the authorities. During his second strike he became so weak that he soon breathed his last in the Government Hospital at Patna. The anger of labourers reached high pitch. Their passions became uncontrollable and as a consequence on the 20th of August, 30,000 labourers staged a general strike, in which young and old male and female participated alike showing their love for their leaders and faith in the ultimate destiny of their Motherland. The strike continued for full 13 days without a single lapse or an untoward happening. To cite Shri T. M. Shah, "Strike was so spontaneous and peaceful that even American and other foreign soldiers had to give their lavish praises and confess, 'we cannot expect our labourers staging such a hartal'. Indeed this strike was in everyway praise-worthy. Not a single traitor could be found amongst them, though the employers and the Government did their level best to sabotage and to win over such persons by putting before them the lurid prospects of getting alluring rewards. Some black-legs and strike breakers were employed, and the strikers were threatened, intimidated and persuaded, but to no avail. Every striker was alive to the fact that he had gone on strike for the general good of the whole society and for the freedom of the country. Many put

their lives in jeopardy, picketted at the gates of the factories and faced many threats and beatings. Such strikes were staged at other places also and everywhere the labourers demonstrated that they were prepared to go to any length and make any sacrifice for the sake of their country and her liberty.

### REPRESSION

The amount and intensity of repression, caused by callous, ruthless and indiscriminate use of well-mechanised and well-equipped police and military force against the armless, famished teeming millions of Bihar out-heroded Herod and has its shameful chapter written in the history of British rule in India. The bureaucracy entertained no mental scruples in crushing the people and riding rough-shod over their natural rights. We cannot find a similar tale of repression elsewhere in world history. One begins to shudder, and one's entire being begins to tremble, as one recalls to memory this harrowing tale. One is filled with remorse and a sense of retaliation and revolt permeates him. Hordes of Tommies, Gurkhas, Jats and Pathans were let loose over the whole Province to put down the rebellion. In the beginning the task of crushing the people was entrusted to the British soldiers because of 'no confidence' in the honesty and integrity of coloured soldiers. But soon they had to be withdrawn because of the indiscriminate and wanton use of their power and their unscrupulous attacks on many innocent people at many places. Many villages were looted and burnt and a virtual reign of terror was established with the help of the military. The police went back to their *thanas* in districts from the headquarters, where they were defeated under the pressure of mob attacks. Women were molested. They were stripped of their clothes and their modesty was outraged. Intact their very existence was threatened. Many villagers were beaten, many more were threatened with arrest and were forced to pay bribes. The well-to-do had to suffer more because of their riches, even though they were just the people who had rendered financial assistance to the Government.

### ATTACK ON CHARKHAISANGH

Even the 'Charkha Sangh' of Bihar Province could not escape savage attack by the military. Madhubani, the main centre of the 'Sangha' was first attacked by the

police and the entire property of the 'Sangha' was seized. But later even 'Khadi Ashrams' at Sakora, Lahoria, Soram, Muzaffarpur, Mamzad, Paznagar, Bashinghayar, Hazipur, Bhagan, Bigara, Nawada, Shivnar, Chab bal, Ranchi, and other places, were the targets of the military attack and their property was also seized. The 'Khadi Bhandars' of Shankar pur, Ahadpur, Khajali, Umgaon, Hamkhan, Mairava, Digbara, Sitamari, and Bithhauri were burnt. All the furniture and fittings were reduced to ashes. In Mahadpur, Madhupur, Mangai, Vidram and Vedul the Khadi Bhandars were looted, by the police and the military. More than 60 workers of Bihar 'Charkha Sangha' were arrested and many more still, who had some direct or indirect connexion with the 'Sangha,' were tortured and tormented in many other ways. Even the 'Dhobis' in the employ of the Sangha were not spared. Their houses were also looted.

A detailed account of the atrocities perpetrated, and the repressive measures adopted by the police and military, is given district-wise in the following pages.

#### 1—PATNA DISTRICT

Population	...	18,36,000
Convictions	...	2,243
Firings	...	at ten places
Wounded	...	121
Deaths	...	30
Arrests	...	4,334
Collective Fines	...	Rs. 8,00,000

Patna, since ages, has remained the metropolitan city of the Province. It has always given lead to the whole Province. True to its traditions it led the Province in August 1942 also. It is from here that the struggle started and spread like wild fire in Bihar. The people of Patna were much aggrieved at the news of the arrest of Congress leaders in Bombay, and the simultaneous arrest of Babu Rajendra Prasad at Patna. 'Hartal's' were organised in Patna and elsewhere. All educational institutions were closed. The provoked and much embittered masses took to sabotage. They cut telephone wires, destroyed post-offices, damaged railway stations, removed rails and brought many state buildings and institutions under their control, as also police 'chaukis' and law courts. The Government machinery was thus cracked and the

administration completely paralysed. The high officials had either to submit to the wishes of the people or to flee to other places for their safety. For many days Patna remained cut off from the rest of the world and was under the control of insurgents.

Monday, 10th August 1942, was a red-letter day in the history of Patna. The students of schools and colleges of Patna marched in thousands in the city, in its lanes and by-lanes, holding aloft the Congress-flags, and exhorting people to join them and to treat themselves as free men and women. They were inviting the people to destroy the foreign domination, to be master of the situation and their destiny. They were persuading the people to make utmost sacrifices, to avenge the arrest of their beloved leaders and restore to themselves the lost national glory. It was a brilliant sight to see, a unique experience of life. House-wives were prepared to rub shoulders with their husbands. Sisters were eager to march forward with their brothers and to participate in the battle for the nation's emancipation. Indeed it was a grand parade of the nation's army, a spectacular pageant of the nation's patriotic emotions. Everybody felt a thrill in his veins. Even small children showed their preparedness to die for their mother-land. These brave young soldiers were marching and behaving in a perfectly non-violent manner. They asked people to sacrifice their lives and not to bend to the man-made storms, or weekly submit to the fury of tyrants, but to vindicate their own honour and that of their nation.

The authorities wanted to disperse them with the help of the police. But even the police had been so much affected by the unique spirit of sacrifice which had permeated every living sensible man and woman that they refused to charge *lathis* and use force against them.

In the morning of August 11, a huge *prabhat phery* was organised which was participated by almost the entire population of Patna. The students started picketing schools and colleges. 'Lathi charge' was made oftener on the picketters; many of them sustained injuries. The city echoed with new political slogans viz. *Bombay se ayi awaz, inqilab Zindabad. Jail ki Kariyan karen pukar Inqilab Zindabad.* (The call has come from Bombay, rise up and revolt. Jail garners are shouting, Rise up and revolt.) Students were marching forward with courage, determination and pride. Near the police-line the Collector, Mr. Archer, with some mounted police and armed police

men was standing to halt the onward march of the processionists. The police was about to make '*lathi-charge*' on the processionists when Mr. Archer timely intervened and the procession proceeded and reached the Girls High School. All of a sudden '*lathi-charge*' was made and the horses began to run to and for un-restrained. The Baluchi horse-riders insolently behaved and harshly treated the people. It was too much for the people to endure and they began to disperse. Many workers fell victim to the *lathi-charge*. Many of them were maimed, crippled and rendered invalids. The patience of the people was put to too great a strain and the spirit of retaliation began to get the better of them. They were now possessed of the spirit of violence and blood-shed. The scattered people collected again, closed their ranks, formed a big mob, and began to throw bricks on the police; but as yet, every one among the mob had not been fully converted to the cult of violence; the *morchha* had to be given up and the procession went forward towards the Secretariat.

Incensed, and intoxicated with immediate prospects of freedom, hoisting of the national flag on the Secretariat became their immediate goal. They knew that they were playing with fire, yet each one of them was prepared to throw him or herself in the wild flames. Nobody could check them. And then, Mr. Archer, reinforced by Gurkha soldiers, appeared in the premises of the Secretariat for its defence. The soldiers were ready to fire with their guns in their hands, aiming at the advance guards of the procession. The procession marched undeterred.

Grinning, Mr. Archer Shouted, What do you want ? "To hoist the National Flag," said a tiny boy in a commanding voice.

"Who wants to hoist the flag?" Let him come forward," asked Mr. Archer, frowning.

Immediately eleven young men came forward making their way through the crowd, flinging their proud chests forward, and with red-hot eyes full of anger. Pointing to a minor student, Mr. Archer questioned threateningly "do you want to hoist the flag? If so, open your breast before you do it." Instantly did the student tear off his shirt and laying his breast open, he paced one step forward from the crowd. Mr. Archer could not appreciate the courage of the student. Far from it, he ordered firing, and in no time all the eleven

students fell victims to the firing, and the volleys of fire fell on the crowd. Many were wounded, but they remained resolute and unmoved and heard someone acclaiming victory. A lean and thin, young man holding tri-colour, was standing on the dome of the Secretariat, shouting '*Bande-mataram*' and '*Quit India*'. He was gaily smiling. The sight caused a pleasant surprise and the people felt a curious sensation in their veins. Their sacrifice had borne fruits. The tricolour was fluttering high in the sky, as if flashing to all the world the pure and lustrous glory of the martyrs, who were lying prostrate on the ground.

Six students fell dead at the spot, 5 were removed to the hospital, three of whom had to be operated upon. One of them, as he was restored to his consciousness, questioned the attending Doctor, "Where did I receive the bullet wound? On my back or on chest"? The doctor knew what the boy meant. Pointing towards his wound he replied, "You have received the wound in the middle of your chest." The boy smiled and uttered slowly with a voice full of pride, "It's good. Now people won't say that I received the wound while retreating," saying so he breathed his last and left behind an immortal story of his sacrifice for the motherland. The bullets when extracted were examined and were found to be D. D. type, the use of which is prohibited by International Law even in war.

The repression wrought by the Government had reached its nadir. Reaction was setting in. The violent passions of the people became uncontrollable and burst forth. They were determined to retaliate. The godown of the City Station of Patna, the letter-boxes, Patna junction, Post Offices and other Government buildings became the target of mob fury. Many engines were damaged, wires were cut and poles and rails were dislodged. The flames, rising from the funeral pyres of the dead martyrs, engulfed the whole Patna District and Bihar Province, and everybody became the living symbol of violent retaliation.

A virtual Republican rule was established in Patna which lasted for two or three days. On the 14th August 10,000 Tommies arrived in the City. They moved in the city in lorries. They began to torture people. Even eminent professors and doctors could not escape the tyranny of these tommies. The whole city was overawed and panick-stricken. When after two days, fresh

military reinforcement arrived and platoons of this army spread over the whole of Patna District a virtual military rule was established in the city.

The Movement was in full swing in Vikrampur, Barh, Bakhtiyarpur, Giriyak, Sthawan, Silam, Hilsa, Chandi and Ekang Sarai, apart from Patna. The police force was called in Giriyak, Silam, Sthawan, Hilsa, Chandi and Ekang Sarai and for many days the authorities could not restore their domination over these places. Behta, Gulzarbagh, Sapisipur, Bepas, Hardasiga, Karauti, Athmal Gola, Angar, Patna City, Bankaghat, Fatua, Khushropur, Maukawanghat, and many other stations were attacked by the people and furniture was destroyed. National flags were hoisted on the courts in Hilsa and Bihar Sharif and they were forcibly made to close down. Two Canadian soldiers were burnt to death at Fatua by the infuriated mob. Loots were organized at Mukama and Behta, and two thousand bales of cloth were taken possession of.

17 persons died of bullet wounds at Phulwari, 8 persons were wounded and one died at Barh; 2 died and 40 were wounded at Vikram, and one person died at Naubatpur. Many more persons fell dead or were wounded at other places also, but no figures are available.

Repression of the worst type was witnessed in Patna District. It is said that in the Bihar Sharif Jail, prisoners were offered urine to drink instead of water, as a torture. At other places even respectable persons were caught and forced to clean drains full of rubbish and dirt.

## 2—MONGHYR DISTRICT

Detentions	...	54
Convictions	...	488
Firings	... At 17 places.	
Wounded	...	85
Arrests	...	927
Attacks on Government institutions		70
Deaths	...	73
Collective fines	... Rs.	1,97,700

Monghyr District is very much politically conscious. The message of the Congress was well received by the people of the District. Shri Kishan Singh and Jagan Lal Chaudhri, the ex-Ministers of Bihar had made

a whirl-wind tour of the district, and exhorted the people to be well prepared to plunge in a National struggle which was soon to be launched by the Congress. As elsewhere, on the 9th of August *hartals* were observed, pickettings were made and demonstrations held. But on the 14th of August, all of a sudden, sabotage activities started. The fury of the Movement spread over the entire district. Even girls came to the fore and participated in the Movement with great zeal. The tricolour was hoisted on the courts which were picketted, and lawyers were forced to suspend their practice. Out of 20 *thanas*, 17 were attacked. Thanas at Ballia, Kharakpur and Tarapur were locked and brought under the management of the people. At Tarapur an Administrative Committee was formed. Judges were appointed and a volunteer corps was organised. The main railway stations were burnt. Post Offices of Gidhaur, Jhajha, Badalpura, Badhri, Parihara, Kharkpura, Asarganj, Gogri, Bakhtiyarpur, Kule, and shekhpura and grog-shops at Khagria, Kule and other places were attacked. National flag was unfurled on courts, in Jamui, Bangusarai, Khagria and Monghyr and later they were locked. Registration papers were thrown in the streets at Kharakpur Gobari, Kule and Shekhpura. Bridges at Bariapur and Tarapur were blown. Attacks were made on the Khagria Bank and on the bungalow of Mr. Ambass. The coal depot at Barauni and furniture and library of Jamui, and Kharakpur High School were damaged. All books were destroyed. The train running from Samastipur to Kharakpur was taken possession of and was used by the volunteers for delivering the message of freedom.

The Monghyr student's procession raising National slogans was marching onward. The police wanted to call a halt to it. They started making *lathi*-charge. Many young men and women received serious injuries. Shri Nirapad Mukerji who was witnessing this cruel drama of police could not bear the sight. He ran to the British sergeant with red hot eyes, and roared like a lion. "Why do you threaten these innocent little children. Shoot at me. I want to know how many bullets are there in your guns and how strong are your *lathis*" ?

At Tarapur, the Thana was taken possession of by the people and a new *thanedar* and *Jamadar* were appointed. The *chaukidars* were strictly warned to faithfully obey the commands of the new Government. To maintain peace and tranquility in the villages a platoon of volunteers was formed. *Panchayats* were organised. A

Committee of 5 judges was brought into being. The conquered area was efficiently administered and the life and property of the people were well-protected against the 'goondas' and dacoits. At other places the police was indulging in loot and plunder. At Sangrampur a wealthy Ahir, knowing that the police would forcibly collect all the foodgrains, distributed all his foodgrains among his poor brethren. He showed better sense in giving all his foodgrains to the villagers. Had this noble example been followed by rich people elsewhere the public as a whole would have greatly been profited. The Government Agricultural Farm at Sabour was raided and looted by the people. The military came down and harassed the whole village, spoiled the grain stored at each villager's house and stole away 40 to 50 tolas of gold from the houses of the Hindus as well as Muslims. At Kalapur the angry mob completely burnt down the station. The military arrived and demanded the names of the culprits from the station master. The culprits being the friends and relations of the latter escaped with impunity while the house of an innocent carpenter was reduced to ashes.

The American military was called in when the situation became uncontrollable but somehow or the other the American soldiers refused to open fire on the people. The angry mob attacked the station and burnt it down but the station master made good his escape.

The courage, fortitude and determination of the people as well as the tempo, scope and intensity of the movement can be judged from the fact, that after finding *lathi-charge* and firing ineffective, the Government had to machinegun the people from aeroplanes. It was an entirely new method of attack adopted by the Government. The people did not know how to defend themselves from an aerial attack. A heavy toll of human lives was registered by this attack. 40 persons became martyrs and 35 were seriously injured. The number of those who received minor injuries was far greater. Firing was resorted to at 16 places namely Begu Sarai, Madarpur, Samchandapur, Rohiyar, Suryagarh, Teghra, Bakhtiyarpur, Kharakpur, Naugauchi, Khagriya, Mansiha Gogri, Maheshkhunt, Madarpur etc. 40 persons were killed and many were wounded. A man fell victim to firing at Bariyapur. 90 foreign soldiers belaboured the people and wounded many others. At Kochahi even innocent {passersby were fired upon.

## 3—CHAMPARAN DISTRICT

Arrests	...	2008
Detentions	...	16
Firing	...	at 6 places
Convictions	...	700
Collective fines	...	Rs. 1.03,360
Deaths	...	22
Wounded	...	55
<i>Government Institutions attacked.</i>		
Thanas	...	9
Post Offices	...	5
Railway Stations	...	2
Other offices	...	3
Victims of Government repression		50 villages

Champaran has its place in the Indian history because it enjoyed the privilege of being the place where Mahatma Gandhi started his first Satyagraha. Again it was this place which for a considerably long period remained the abode of Mahatma Gandhi and Babu Rajendra Prasad. Contact with these two eminent figures had made the workers and people of the district devoutly non-violent. The leadership of the Movement, therefore, remained with the Congress workers in this District, and the people did not attempt the murder of any official. Attempts were no doubt made to burn Government institutions but that was done in a perfectly non-violent manner and the masses were provoked only after the police repression.

The movement began in the District on the 10th of August in the form of a general strike. On the 11th a huge procession marched in the streets of towns and villages. The police opened fire resulting in injuries to five persons. Sabotage activities began from Raxol on the 12th of August and great damage was done to railway stations in Sagauli, Motihari, Mahasi, etc. The indignant mob burnt down the Income-Tax-Office in Motihari, attacked recruiting office and destroyed bridges, wires etc. *Thanas* were attacked in Govindgarh, Raxol, Sagauli, Dacca, Ghorasahan, Pipra, Kasaria, Madhuban, and Adapur, and post-offices in Ramgarhwa, Dacca, Atera, Ghorasahan and Mukhwa, and a canal at Dacca was attacked. Efforts were made to loot and burn them down.

On all the *thanas* in Betia Division national flags were hoisted. The police went back to the headquarters and the mob got control of almost all the post offices in the sub-division.

Immediately after the movement started, the Hindu Collector at Motiahari was not allowed to function and all the powers of administration were given over by the Government to two Europeans, the Circle Manager and Manager of Madhuban State. These two, with the help of the British Tommies, launched a brutal repressive attack which resulted in frequent firings at Betia, Ghorasahan, Phuinta, Panchpokharia and Mehasi. At Mehasi, Ram Avtar Shah was called at the platform and shot dead. The Congress Ashram of Adapur was burnt. The army indulged in the loot and plunder at 50 places, viz, Sagauli, Phulwaria, Mehasi, Barkagaon, Narkatiaganj etc. The people in the jail were tortured and harassed. 3 persons were given only one blanket to cover their bodies with, and 10 persons were given only one tumbler. 120 persons were huddled together at a place which was hardly sufficient to accommodate 40 persons. In Betia sub-division the army indulged in outrageous behaviour. Articles of daily necessities were forcibly taken possession of free of cost from the shop-keepers. The villages were attacked at dead of night. The menfolk were beaten, women molested. Wearing of Gandhi cap was a crime and the wearers were given severe beatings. People were sentenced upto imprisonment of forty years in this region.

#### 4—SHAHABAD DISTRICT

Arrests	...	2255
Convictions	...	1810
Firings	...	at 19 places
Detentions	...	79
Collective Fines	...	Rs. 50,000
Government institutions attacked		
Police stations burnt	...	30
Railway Stations	...	15
Post Offices	...	10

Shahabad is known to the people as the homeland of Shri Kumar Singh, the leader of first battle of liberty (1857). The Movement with all its fury was actually started on the 10th August in this District. A huge

demonstration was organised by the workers of Shahabad. A mammoth gathering assembled at Ramana Maidan in the evening where the people listened to the speech of their leader, Shri Pradyumna Mishra who explained to them the position taken by the Congress on the one hand and the barbarities perpetrated by the Government on the other. The police authorities thought of checking the progress of the Movement by arresting Shri Mishraji. They made their way through the surging ocean of humanity, with a view to effecting the arrest of the speaker. As soon as the popular leader was arrested, the temper of the audience ran high and they fell on the police. The police got completely unnerved. They fled away for the safety of their lives. So sudden, quick and restless was their stampede that the S.D.O. could not even take with him his hat and ran helter-skelter.

Soon other police officers arrived at the scene with a posse of armed police who were ordered to make *lathi* charge. But the people stood their ground un-deterred listening to the speech of their leader. This brought about a change of heart on the part of the police and they refused to torture their brethren, the fearless fighters of freedom. This psychological change freed the people of the fear of repression. After the conclusion of the meeting, National flags were sent up high on the Government buildings and offices. Without shedding a drop of blood, people gained control over 17 other *thanas* but this peaceful situation did not last long. The British Tommies soon arrived and a blood-bath was enacted throughout the district. Firing was resorted to at Ara, Bhavira, Jukhati, Shahapur, Lagari, Balliganj, Shahsram, Sanjhoba, Motgini, Manua, Durgavati, Martari, Kumraon, Nayana-gar, Baloha, Attaria. Amri and Shahabad.

This did not help in subsiding the fury of the people. They became markedly aggressive and attacked police *thanas* at Barhara, Peero, Sandesh, Jagdispur, Rohtas, Chenari, Kinar, Naukha, Nasrigani, Vikramganj, Ramgarh, Durgavati, Chand, Achhaura, Chainpur, Kudra, Dumraon Nawabnagar and Brahmipur. People got control over and locked the *thanas* at Barhara, Shahpura, Rohtas, Dilar, Nokha, Vikramganj, Ramgarh, Chand, Achchaura and Chainpura. The police were forced to lay down their arms. The Sahasram Thana remained under people's control for full 1½ months and people formed administrative committees. The railway stations at Sengaon Garauti, Parpkhur, Dhnauti, Piyaro Nubar, Hasanbazar,

Kumahu, Karbandia, Dehari, Vikramganj, Durgavati, Kudra and Dukrao were burnt. The students appropriated a railway train and Peero which was subsequently used for the transport of Congress volunteers. Over and above the post offices in Parosahar, Sahasram Dalmia Nagar, Nokha, Vikramganj, Bhabua, Ramgarh and Dumraon were looted and burnt. Other city offices and taverns were broken. The peculiar characteristic of the Movement was that after the *thanas* were taken over by the public the police fled away; and surprisingly enough not a single case of loot and plunder were recorded while cases of this nature were frequent and numerous after the restoration of *thanas* to the police.

The Village Dumraon has immortalised itself in the history of the District. A mob 5,000 strong reached the *thana* to hoist the National banner. Kapil Muni, a young man of 21 years was holding the National flag in his hands. He stepped forward. The *thanedar* shouted, 'mind it, if you pace forward you will be shot dead'. Kapil Muni was not afraid of such threats. He was prepared to die for nation's cause and sign his own death-warrant. Steadily did he march forward with a cosummate grace of a general. The heartless cruel *thanedar* could not admire Kapil Muni's bravery. He fired with his revolver. The youngman received fatal wounds on his chest. He fell on the ground quite unconscious, holding tight the National flag. The *thanedar* stepped forward, snatched the National flag and trampled it under his feet.

There was a young man in the crowd who could not brook the humiliation of the National flag. He was Ram Das Lohar by name. His blood surged up. Violently did he move a step forward to pick up the National flag. Hardly could he touch the flag when the trigger of the revolver was set into motion again and he followed Kapil Muni to the land of martyrs. His sacrifice provoked an old man with grey hair to take his place. With his proud breast flung open he cast his challenging eyes on the *thanedar* which the latter could not tolerate and took the third toll of life by killing the old man also. The crowd was not lacking yet such brave heroes. A young lad 19 years old, named Gopal Ram, took up the challenge and gushed forward. He was hit below his belt and fell down bleeding profusely and died in the hospital after four hours. The 16th August has long past yet the memory of these brave heroes will ever remain fresh and green. They have left behind a glorious heritage of freedom, and their names will go down in the history of Indian independence.

The repression reached its zenith. Firing was resorted to at 18 places. At Sahasram the processionists were machine-gunned. Villages near about the Ganges were plundered and burnt. They still present a look of a desert. People were mercilessly beaten at Ghandiha, Kasam, Jitaura, Sanjhauli, Baligaon etc. Their shattered bodies were laid on the ground, soaked in their own blood. So relentlessly was a young student, Nandgopal Singh of village Bali, beaten that he still has marks left all over his body.

Congress workers were awarded long terms of imprisonment for minor lapses and faults. Each of them was given 20 years' rigorous imprisonment for such lapses. Five persons were hanged. In order to extract information about Zamir Khan, a Congress worker of Sagraon, who was absconding, his brother was arrested, though he had no hand in the Movement. It clearly shows how the police was intent upon suppressing the people.

With men-folk even women and children were fired at. They were not made exception to any measure of repression. They equally suffered with men-folk. At Ghansoi women were molested.

#### 5—GAYA DISTRICT

Arrests	...	1035
Convictions	...	789
Collective fines	...	Rs. 2,43,600
<i>Government Institutions attacked</i>		
Police thanas	...	14
Post-Offices and other places		56

Gaya is situated on Patna Ranchi Road, and has been a military nerve centre where a large number of soldiers are stationed. Though dissatisfaction was brewing in every village of the district in 1942 the presence of an overwhelming number of soldiers kept the people a bit scared. On the 9th of August many arrests were made throughout the Province and the people demonstrated their anger in various ways. The whole District was at first panicky, but very soon the people took courage and resolved to risk their lives for the defence and the dignity of their nation. They began to actively participate in the Movement on the 14th of August and soon anarchy and reign of terror spread in the district. For full 1½ months

there was no traffic or movement of the people from one place to another.

The angry mobs attacked *thanas* in Wazirganj, Belanganj, Kurtha, Ghoshi, Urbal, Nawinnagar, Kumba and Dadnagar. From about 14 *thanas* the police, having failed to control the situation there, was recalled to the sub-division headquarters. Railway stations of Daraganj, Belanganj and Wazirganj were burnt. Taverns and fifty-six post-offices were attacked and damaged. Post Offices in Urbal, Nawinnagar, Dadnagar, Ghoshi and Kurtha were plundered and burnt. Some offices belonging to the Canal Department fell victim to the people's wrath. Many rounds were fired in Gaya District. 3 persons were killed and 11 were wounded, 2 killed with *lathi* and spears. On the 18th of August when the mob approached the Kurtha *thana* to hoist the national flag, the police attacked them with daggers and spears. Shri Shyam Behari Lal, Secretary, *Thana* Congress Committee, was killed on the spot. Shri Dushadhya Singh, a village primary school teacher in the Urbal *thana* was beaten to death, only because he had participated in the procession. Similar repressive measures were adopted to realise the collective fines.

The characteristic feature of the Movement in the District was that many hundreds of Muslims played their active role in the Movement, to the last and many of them actually led the Movement.

#### 6—HAZARIBAGH DISTRICT

Detentions	...	8
Arrests	...	450
Firings	...	at 2 places
Convictions	...	250
Collective fines	...	Rs. 1,0,0000/

The Movement in Hazaribagh commenced on the 11th August, 1942. Shrimati Sarswati Devi M.L.A. organised a procession to demonstrate public resentment against the arrest of their leaders for many days. Such processions used to be taken without any set programme but even then the police began to interfere. This provoked the people and resulted in some stray cases of attacks on the post offices, the European Club, Lal Company and Deputy Commissioner's Court.

The intensity of the Movement in this district was at its highest pitch especially in Giridih and mica fields. At the news of arrest of their leaders the working class grew restive and indignant. They wanted to help their leaders and secure their release. They were advised to keep to demonstrating their indignation and protest in a peaceful and organised manner. For days together they waited for a message of hope and consolation from their leaders. But as none came from that way they were disappointed and organised a demonstration at Jhumri Talia. A procession was taken out which dispersed after having caused some damage to the post office, railway station, and liquor shops.

Another procession was taken out in Damchanch. People who were participating in the procession showed perfect allegiance to non-violence which too could not be tolerated by the authorities. A *lathi-charge* was made on the processionists and firing was resorted to. Two persons fell dead and 22 were wounded. The number of processionists was staggeringly large. They could easily achieve whatever they wished. They were undeterred, despite the repression. But the Congress leaders advised the people to remain peaceful and non-violent which the latter did, though they were greatly provoked and were convinced that they were too many to be suppressed by the police, and could easily crush the police and defend their lives and property.

The authorities left no stone unturned, no measure unadopted and no arm or weapon unused to curb the rising spirits of the people. Prisoners in Kodrama thana were so brutally assaulted, that even a callous man would shudder to think of it. The police stooped too low; they made the people naked on the highways and cross-roads, whipped them till they began to bleed profusely, and became half-dead. They remained lying on the ground all day in an unconscious state, and after night-fall they were pushed into the prison-cells. One or two persons died at the very gates of the Jail. Owners of big companies were humiliated and dishonoured and their property was damaged.

#### 7—BHAGALPUR DISTRICT

Detentions	...	100
Arrests	...	4000
Convictions	...	1000

Collective fines	...	Rs. 2,18,440
Firings	...	at 55 places.
Deaths	...	218
<i>Government Institutions attacked</i>		
Police Thanas	...	21
Railway Stations	...	25
Post-offices	...	7
Institutions which fell victim to Government repression.....23		
(including many khadibhandars)		
Other victims	...	1000

This district has always been forward and in the forefront of every national struggle. It was at Bahirpur, a village of this district that Babu Rajendra Prasad received heavy *lathi* blows in 1930. Since then the district as a whole has become very much politically conscious and has always been in the fore. Owing to the influence of Dr. Rajendra Prasad this district abounds in peaceful workers, but since this district is also the main field of Babu Jai Prakash Narain's activities; radicals are by no means few. It is for this reason that except for 3 days when there were peaceful demonstrations in the district, there were many violent activities for the rest of the time in connection with the Movement of August 1942. But the people of Supole were singularly non-violent throughout.

There are 4 Divisions viz. Bhalpur, Banka, Kaghepur and Supol in this district and except for Supol Division the Movement was a great success in this district. On August 10 students and the public took out separate processions and both the processions, after making full round of the City, reached Kutcheri. The students attacked the Collector's Office and Head Post-Office and fixed tricolour on both of them. On the 11th the people attacked Congress House which had been taken possession of by the police on the 9th of August, and seized it from the authorities. The Movement gathered momentum and force thereafter. The records of the college in the city office of the Inspector of Schools and Income-Tax Office were burnt. Railway godown at Bhagalpur was looted, and the Registration Office and the Office of the Bahirpur Thana were reduced to ashes. The mob attacked the goods store and took away hundreds of sugar bags. Rails covering an area of one hundred mile in length between Khagaria

and Katiahar were dislodged and railway line between Pasraha and Narainpur was completely damaged, making it impossible for trains to run over the line for full 6 months.

On the 13th of August the police decamped with *Charkhas*, spindles etc. from the '*Charkha*' training centre at Sahafabad and locked them in the '*thana*'. The people did not tolerate this condemnable deed of the police. They were infuriated to the highest pitch and attacked the *thana* which was completely wrecked and all the snatched-away property of the '*Charkha*' Training Centre was restored to it by the people. The godowns of Pachhgachhia, Saharsa and Sonbasa kutcheris were looted in which there were 10,000 sleepers and other furniture. People brick-batted three engines and damaged them.

Within the jurisdiction of Bangaon Thana twelve Zamindars had licensed guns. The Congress volunteers threatened them to deposit those guns in the Congress Camps or else face evil consequences. The Zamindars were completely unnerved. Within 24 hours 7 guns were deposited in the camp. A gun from Saharsa Mission and a car, one radio-set, one gun, 12 cartridges, one dynamo and 15 tins of patrol from a Christian lady, Miss H.E. were taken possession of by the Congress volunteers. They had thus sufficient equipment and appendages. They established five centres at Saharsa, Pacchgachhia and other places and began to propagate Congress views, and to convey Congress messages in the neighbouring villages. The cars were used for mail delivery and for distributing propaganda literature.

The sabotage activities in the Supol Division were on a very mild scale. Little damage was done to Government property though all the *thanas* had been taken under their control by the people and all the police arms were put into their custody. The Government officials began to be treated as friends. For full one month all the offices remained closed under the patrol of Congress volunteers. Owing to the rainy season the Division was full of water everywhere, therefore the army could not be moved to suppress the people. But slowly and steadily a few army troops arrived in this division by boats and by other means of transportation. The army indulged in many repressive orgies and looted the people. Many persons from this division joined hand with the authorities and executed death warrants on their own brethren. Peaceful and unarmed people were stripped naked, beaten,

by the white soldiers who used to sit on their breasts and torture them.

Owing to the cruel and repressive measures adopted by the police and the army the Movement at Bhagalpure and Banka sub-division lost most of its intensity. Those Congress workers who were still out of the jails formed a 'Parsuram Dal' after the name and under the leadership of Babu Parsuram, whose main object was to attack police and military centres. The police attacked this organisation, disbanded it and arrested Babu Parsuram, but it was soon reorganised by Babu Shia Ram and was rechristened as 'Shia Ram Dal'. Under Babu Shia Ram this organisation ventured in many exploits at many places. Police was attacked and disarmed, but at many places again some members of this organisation received bullet wounds from the police. Many people who were suspected of having openly or secretly assisted the police in detecting their secret camps were belaboured, disfigured and their limbs chopped off. The police took to other immoral tactics to defame the Congress. They released 80 famous dacoits much before their sentences expired, and encouraged them to indulge in loot and plunder in the name of the Congress. These dacoits were tired of repression. So all of them with their leader, Mahendragop joined Shia Ram Dal which was considerably reinforced by now and had accumulated much strength. The 'Shia Ram Dal' now attacked the authorities very frequently and attacked Government property. After some days Mahendragop was arrested. Many cases were instituted against him and he was finally hanged.

But Babu Shia Ram despite many attacks which he had conducted on the Government, could not be arrested. This organisation proved to be a great bulwork against the Government repression. It is possible that some people may not agree with the methods employed by the organisation and its programme but undoubtedly it was manned by brave and courageous people who played their significant role during the great days of the August Revolution.

The repression carried on in this district was intense, wide-spread and soul-stirring. Its tales are full of horror and are nerve-racking. Some prisoners in Bhagalpur, in order to demonstrate their resentment, raised the banner of revolt. Many rounds were fired on them. 125 of them were roasted in their cages. But not a single police official was killed. At Sukhbarghat and Trimoha ghat military

troops were encamped; they tormented people coming to both these Ghats. In the Bahirpur thana, alleged to be the centre of Shia Ram Dal, after every 3 or 4 villages at every cross-road, a military force was encamped. Soldiers living in these camps had not a pie to pay for their daily necessities and freely robbed people living in these areas of their articles. Women passing through these camps used to be dragged and molested.

The extent of the repression and the determination of the Government to suppress the people can very well be judged and proved decisively. In order to extract information about the absconders, their movement and whereabouts, their relations irrespective of their age and sex were put under arrest. Old men and women in their hoary age and even sucklings were all pushed inside the jails. A child aged 18 months, whose father was absconding, was jailed and for full four days was kept away from his mother. He was subsequently released, because the jail authorities refused to take his charge. An old man aged 70 named Madan Jha was similarly incarcerated. As compared to other districts firing was resorted to at many more places in this district, and far greater number of people were killed. Many more villages were burnt.

Even Khadi Bhandars were not spared of the flames of carnage and repression. The Charkha Training Centre of Safedabad was burnt and Swarajya Bhawan and Khadi Bhandar of Supol were completely destroyed.

### 8-MUZAFFARPUR DISTRICT

Arrests	1000
Detentions	60
Convictions	3000
Firings	at 13 places
Collective Fines	Rs. 369900
Deaths	33
<i>Government Institutions attacked</i>	
Police Thanas	16
Railway stations	9
Registration offices	5
<i>Victims of Government repression</i>	
Villages	21
Khadi-bhandars	6

District Muzaffarpur has remained a centre of constructive work in the Province of Bihar. Majority of its people have undying faith in non-violence as an effective weapon for winning Swarajya. So the Movement in its initial stage in the district was perfectly non-violent. The main objective of the people was to paralyse Government machinery by organising demonstrations, taking out processions and unfurling National flag on important Government buildings. The police authorities found it difficult to suppress the Movement, in the way it was then being conducted; they also felt that they could more effectively loot the people when the latter's violent passions were aroused. They, therefore, spread many canards and thus incited mob violence.

In the beginning the people hoisted national flags on all Government buildings and institutions including *thanas*, registration offices, stations and post-offices. The police officials went back to headquarters on account of the suzerainty established by the people. A *thanedar* named Arjun Singh, was so much afraid of the people's might in Pupari *thana* that he with his friends, left it and fled to Sitagarhi. From there he spread a false news, with the help of some spies in his employ, that he was coming back to Pupari *thana* with 23 lorries full of soldiers, on 24th August 1942 and he would let loose these soldiers on the people. People felt very anxious and looked concerned as they received this news. In the early hours of the 24th August all the villagers assembled in their thousands at Bajpatti, and waited for the arrival of Arjun Singh. He was nowhere to be seen but unfortunately soon a motor, reached the spot. Thinking that Arjun Singh had come the furious mob fell upon the motor and attacked it, making Hardip Singh S.D.O., one Police Inspector and orderly and one Havildar, victims of their wrath. When the news of these gruesome murders reached the district authorities, the Collector, G.I.P. and Arjun Singh reached Pupari with 11 lorries. The same day the military attacked the famous firm, Lal Chand Madan Gopal and looted property worth Rs.30,000. Two sons of the Seth viz. Niranjana Prasad and Gopal Prasad were arrested and tortured with butt-ends of guns. The third son, Deoki Prasad, was killed, and efforts were made to molest the wife of the eldest son, Niranjana Prasad. But that brave lady faced those beastly hordes heroically and defeated their inhuman attempts on her chastity. Arjun Singh again turned up with nine lorries full of soldiers on Aug. 26th and ordered the soldiers to fire indiscriminately.

Many persons were killed and 12 were wounded. On the 3rd of September this wretch again appeared at Pupari with soldiers packed in ten lorries and looted the famous firms of Chunni Lal Pali Ram, Kamala Prasad's shop, Gauri Shankar's shop and Sitaram Store, and ran away with a huge booty worth Rs. 60,000. The entire *thana* was terror-stricken. Residents of Bandgaon fled to Nepal ravines. The whole village was burnt by the military and 300 houses were reduced to ashes.

Fruits of injustice are very sour indeed. The cup of Arjun Singh's injustices was too full. It was about to spill. Even the Government was horrified. He was declared a dacoit and a case was instituted against him. He was sentenced to rigorous imprisonment for eight and a half years.

The people unfurled the national flag in a peaceful manner on *thanas*, post-offices etc., also at Paroo Lalganj Minapur, Katra etc. On 15 August a mob attacked the Meerapur *thana*. The police fired many rounds on the mob which resulted in one death and injuries to 5 persons. The people could not tolerate it. They hurled brick-bats on the *Daroga* who fell down severely wounded. The people collected the furniture and papers belonging to the *thana*, set fire to the heap and entrusted the *Daroga* to its flames. The same day Gazipur sub-jail was broken open and all Congress workers were released.

On the 11th a mob consisting of public workers and students attacked the railway station at Sitamarhi and took possession of the train. They began to travel without ticket. When they found that they could not sufficiently cripple the Government machinery they took to dislocation and sabotage activities. They dislodged rails between Darbhanga and Raxol. Sitapur-Muzaffarpur Road was breached at many places and bridges were damaged.

The story of Government repression in this district was much similar to that in other districts. Many villages, including Bhagwanpur, Ratanpur, Bithauli Bandgaon. Pupari, Sheohar, etc., were burnt and houses of Congressmen were looted. The bungalow of Th. Ram Nandan Singh was pillaged, causing a loss of Rs. 50,000. Nawab High school and its library at Sheohar were looted and set on fire. Even the boarders' luggage in the boarding house was not spared. The *Khadi-bhandurs* in Pupari, Bithaula, Sitamarhi, Bichhoha, Sihan and Gizipur were either plundered or burnt, involving a loss of Rs. 12, 121-86. Ramphal Dhanu, a resident of Badgaon was implicated

in a murder case and was hanged. Shri Pradip Singh, Tilewa Singh and Harinandan Ghosh were transported for life. Many arrests of innocent persons in connection with the Bandgaon shooting case, were made. Even those who were already in jail were held to be culprits. Shri Ram Hridaya Sharma who had been in jail since August 20 was also held to be a culprit, as also Baba Narsingh Dass who too was in jail. He was subsequently released. Some inkling of the irregularities observed in the police department can be had through these examples.

### 9—SANTHAL PARGANA

Arrests	...	600
Deaths	...	26
Collective Fines	...	Rs. 50,000

In Bihar 'Santhal Pargana' is an exclusive area and is under the direct supervision of the Governor. The August Movement spread here also and 600 persons were arrested. It will be noteworthy that of these 200 were aboriginies. Six persons were shot down and 20 persons died in jail. About Rs. 50,000/- were realised as collective fines. The terms of imprisonment of many prisoners aggregated to about 35 years. The Santhal Pargana District Board was also suspended under the Defence of India Rules.

### 10—PUERNIA DISTRICT

Arrests	...	1475
Detentions	...	25
Firings	...	At nine places
Convictions	...	700
Collective Fines	...	Rs. 1,28,000
Deaths	...	45
Wounded	...	60
<i>Government Institutions attacked</i>		
Police thanas	...	13
Post Offices	...	18
Railway Stations	...	22
Taverns	...	18

*Victims of repression*

Villages	...	72
Institutions	...	2
Houses	...	500

District Purnia falls on the eastern boundry of Bihar and is quite close to Bengal. The Kisans and Mazdoors who form a very great majority in the district were greatly influenced by Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose and his 'Forward Bloc'. It was for this reason that there were intense activities and enthusiastic programmes in connection with this Movement.

The Movement in the District was organised and conducted in a very disciplined manner. As elsewhere, in the beginning the Movement was very peaceful. People took out processions, organised general strikes, established control over Government Institutions and unfurled national banner. It all happened in a very peaceful, organised and disciplined manner. On the 13th August a vast crowd made an organised attack on the Katiahar Thana. The S.D.O, ordered firing and the soldiers made indiscriminate use of their position of vantage. 8 persons were killed at the spot. Among them was a boy named Dhruva, a student of Shantiniketan. He got a fatal wound on his thigh and fell down. After a little while he was admitted in a hospital but his condition continued to deteriorate. The Doctors did their best to save the precious life of this brave lad but his condition became worse and he closed his eyes on this world for ever. The 13th August has passed yet he remains permanently embedded both in the hearts and the minds of his compatriots. By the noble sacrifice of his life he has become immortal and like the famous Dhruva of Indian mythology he will continue to inspire his countrymen, nay, the whole humanity to be prepared to face death for a noble cause.

Dhruva's father, Dr. Kundoo is a very prominent worker of this Province. After entrusting the dead body of his child to the consuming flames of funeral pyre, Dr. Kundoo, with a broken heart and mind full of grief, was returning to his house. But the cup of his miseries was not yet emptied. The police did not spare even a father whose son had just fallen victim to their barbarities. The train which was taking Dr. Kundoo back to his home was stopped at Ravatara. Dr. Kundoo was detained and arrested. Dr. Kundoo was not even given time and facilities to perform the rites connected with the death of

his child. He was overwhelmed with sorrow and was brutally treated by the police, still he bore all this cheerfully, and continued his struggle for his country's freedom. This was a pitiful sight, and sent the blood up in the veins of those who were witnessing the drama. Dr. Kundoo treaded his way towards the jail.

The people were highly provoked at this relentless, soulless and inhuman behaviour of the police. No more could they stick to the high ideals of non-violence. The sacrifice of innocent lives aroused their violent passions and they were prepared to retaliate now. The furious mob marched forward and attacked 13 *thanas* at Rupauli, Ghandaha, Gharhara, Barari, Raniganj, Farwisganj etc. One *thanedar* and 3 soldiers were killed and dozens of post-offices and stations were looted and burnt.

The police adopted various repressive measures, and opened fire at Katiahar, Banmankhi Rasiganj, Rupauli, Ghandaha, Devipur, Khanjachi, Hati, Purnia, Kadani and Kakharia. 5 persons were killed and more than 60 wounded. The 'Khadi Bhandars' at Kitapatti and Bamanki were burnt. 70 villages fell victim to the police repression and 500 houses were burnt and looted.

In this District there are more Muslims than in any other district of the Province. It was to the great credit of these Muslims, and it was their privilege indeed, that they shared all the sufferings arising from the Movement and openly participated in it with their Hindu brethren.

### 11—SARAN DISTRICT

Arrests	2000
Convictions	55
Deaths	517
Detentions	721
Collective Fines	Rs. 195,000

#### *Government buildings attacked*

Police <i>thanas</i>	18
Railway Stations	24
Post Offices	3
Registration Offices	2

After the arrest of leaders many peaceful demonstrations were held over the district. Meetings were organised, speeches were made, the national anthem was sung

and *hartals* in schools, colleges, towns and markets were observed. On the 13th of August, as the meeting was being held in Sewan, the police attacked the people and fired at them. Three persons were killed and nine injured. The people were provoked to violence and they decided to destroy Government property. They wanted to damage means of communications and transport and to paralyse the Government administration. On the 14th of August, Chhapra Station was surrounded by 20,000 persons and was burnt down. Later on, loco-engine shed and the court were also set on fire. The Maharajganj *thana* was taken possession of by the mob and national flag was hoisted on it.

A huge crowd attacked Sonpur Junction and burnt down the Booking-Office. Some persons went to the engine-shed, started three engines and left them to themselves; they consequently fell into the river. On the 15th and 16th August Karabara *Thana* and Registration Office were attacked, locked and set on fire. On the 18th, as a meeting was being held in Karabara, five British and one Anglo-Indian soldiers suddenly appeared on the spot with tommy guns and revolvers and began to fire indiscriminately. The exasperated crowd fell on them, disarmed and finally killed them. 2 persons among the crowd lost their lives. Thus, throughout the Movement only 6 government officials were killed.

A huge mass of men and women assembled outside the premises of Sewan *thana* and tried to hoist the National flag on it. The policemen resorted to firing. Babu Khulna Prasad and three other youngmen died and became martyrs. At this time of attack Shrimati Tarawati wife of Babu Khulna Prasad, was with her husband. When her husband received the wound she tore away her *sari*, bandaged his wound and taking the National flag in her hand marched towards the *thana*. When she returned to her husband after hoisting the flag he had already died.

It is hard to forget the noble sacrifice made by Babu Khulna Prasad. On one side there was the bare and proud breast of the martyr and on the other was the concentrated devilish British power. A fusillade of gun-fire was directed against Babu Khulna Prasad. His body was riddled with the bullets and fell dead on the ground. He had received no less than nine bullets. In fact he died a death which is unprecedented in the history of Indian martyrs who laid down their lives in the cause of the freedom of their mother-land. A Muslim gentleman in order to rescue

a child who was being aimed at by some soldiers, ran towards the soldiers with his breast flung open and challenged them to first settle the matter with him. Suddenly a bullet pierced his breast and he died the death of a martyr.

### REPRESSION

As elsewhere burning of houses, *lathi* charges and molestation of women etc. became the order of the day in the Saran District. But there were instances of outrageous behaviour by the police which transcended all the bounds of decency. A two-year old child of Shri Jagan Lal Chaudhri, an ex-Minister, was strangled to death in Nakhabazar. A posse of British soldiers bound for Sewan killed two boys aged 13 and 18 years respectively. Babu Ram Vinod Singh's house at village Malkha Chak was blown with dynamite. On the 3rd September some British soldiers were passing through the jail premises when the prisoners shouted national slogans. The Captain got irritated, entered the jail and ordered 16 prominent prisoners to be awarded 30 whips each.

Six lakhs of men and women participated in the movement.

#### 12—RANCHI DISTRICT

Arrests	...	394
Detentions	...	22
Collective Fines	...	Rs. 6000
Convictions	...	316
Attack on Government Institutions		9

It is a mountainous district like Palam. Most of the people of this district are illiterate, simple, unsophisticated and descendants of aborigines. It is a great military centre. Due to military movements and political situation outside the district, the whole district was stirred, but owing to the rainy season and damaged state of road communications, the movement in its initial stages remained confined to Ranchi City and its vicinity. It could not spread to the other parts of this district, where the message of freedom and the cry of open revolt reached only very late. But even there a great conflagration took place and the movement raged like wild fire, lasting for a considerably longer period. The movement in the Ranchi District, as a whole, was intense throughout

the month of October. Students of this district played a great part in the furtherance of the Movement. They left colleges and schools, formed themselves into processions and staged many non-violent and peaceful demonstrations. The police authorities showed better sense in handling the situation. They did not oppose the processionists hoisting flags on public buildings. The result was that the fury of the people subsided. They returned to their places after hoisting flags. At a few places some of the Government buildings were locked up by them but were again unlocked when the police authorities assured them that they were the loyal servants of an independent Government and were at its beck and call.

The tri-colour was unfurled on Mander, Kundoo, Manpur, Bairow and Bishanpur *thanas* and with the exception of the Kundoo *thana* all *thanas* were locked. Argado station was burnt. Rails between Ranchi and Lohardaga were removed, the aerodrome at Hinoo, military camp at lohardaga, post-offices at Ranchi and the Civil Secretariat were considerably damaged. There was extensive wire-cutting activity in Kokar village.

When a procession reached the jail premises, the students who were in the prison tried to break open the jail gates to come out. But owing to lack of assistance from outside and obstruction put by other inmates of the jail they could not escape, though they had successfully crossed one gate. A heavy *lathi*-charge was made later on in which Atma Ram Buddhia, the richest boy of Ranchi city received serious injuries.

### 13--DARBHANGA DISTRICT

Arrests	19000
Detentions	18
Firings	at nine places
Convictions	1900
Collective Fines	Rs. 489500
Deaths	38
Persons wounded	97
<i>Government Institutions attacked.</i>	
Police Thanas	18
Railway Stations	11

Post Offices	4
Other buildings	5
<i>Victims of repression</i>	
Villages	3000
Other Institutions	14

Darbhanga is the old metropolitan city of Mithila kingdom. The people of this place have been introduced to the freedom's fight since ages and have inherited a remarkable cultural and social heritage. They know what price one has to pay for winning freedom. That is why the people of this Division remained unmoved even when they were being fired at.

This district abounds in followers of Gandhiji and has numerous eminent constitutionalists. After the arrest of the leaders, many huge demonstrations were held, speeches were delivered and early release of the leaders was sought for. The leaders of the movement were laying particular emphasis upon the non-violent side of the Movement. They did not want any lapses. As elsewhere the people were tormented and harassed but they continued with their peaceful activities. According to these people the sabotage activities like cutting of wires etc. did not amount to violence and so they freely participated in such activities. The Movement was throughout non-violent in its character, though spasmodic lapses were not lacking.

The Movement started in Darbhanga on the 10th of August when a general strike was organised. Upto the 16th processions were daily taken out, some of them being 10,000 strong. At many places the mob was attacked by the police and students received many wounds. Rails were removed, wires were cut, trains were held up and all the papers belonging to *thanas* were burnt after establishing control over them and, national flags were hoisted on government bulidings. On the 10th a huge procession came from the neighbouring villages and as it reached the station, firing was resorted to and as a result one person was killed and 10 were wounded. Babu Janki Misra was kicked on the back and killed.

At Behara the police attacked Congress office on the 10th of August, and took away all its papers. The same day the Secretary of the. Thana Congress Committee received a letter from an unknown source dwelling upon 16 items of the programme. A scheme was elaborated for attacks on the *thanas*. On the 13th, Congress flag was

unfurled on the local *thana* by a peaceful mob. Even in the villages this programme was put into practice. Under the leadership of Shrimati Janki Devi, a mob 50,000 strong, reached Bahera on the 19th, attacked the local *thana* and burnt all the bits of furniture and papers. All the officials of the *thana* fled away for the safety of their lives. The mob attacked and locked the Registration as well as the Post-Offices. A guard of 45 Volunteers was commissioned to patrol the town. A public meeting was held in which dislocation of means of communication and transport were resolved upon. The wires were tampered with and Railway stations at Manchhai and Sakari were damaged. People's control over the *thana* continued upto 22nd August. The British military arrived from Darbhanga on the 22nd and repression was launched upon.

At Madhubani, the students and public workers took out a huge procession on the 12th of August and marched on to the court. The police made a *lathi* charge with a view to disperse the procession. Bindeswari Singh and Viswanath Lal Karna were arrested and whipped but the people did not lose courage. Much against the hopes of the police they remained undeterred. This courageous attitude taken up by the people, so much influenced the police authority that they soon released the arrested persons and allowed them to hoist the National flag. The next day thousands of villagers arrived from far and near and began to cut wires and dislodge rails. On the 15th of August under the leadership of Ganesh Chandra Jha, a procession 5,000 strong was taken out which reached the *thana* where *lathi* charge was made on the people. The processionists still remained unmoved. The police opened fire and as a result one person died on the spot and one received serious injuries. The wounded man was dragged by his one leg by the police upto the *thana*, where he died soon afterwards.

On the 14th, the S. D. O's car was shattered, in village Kulahi in the Khajoli *thana* with *lathi* blows, and cycles were snatched away from the constables. The Flex Company on Phusa Road was attacked by the people. The whole Company was burnt, involving a loss of Rs. 2,00,000.

The repression was in full swing. Villages in Sighia *thana* were pillaged and ruined by the police and British Tommies. 18 houses were burnt. People were beaten black and blue. One eminent old Congress worker was half killed and a Tomm's urine was poured into his mouth.

They entered into the house of the people, molested women and even girls working in their fields fell victim to their carnal passion. In Samastpur Division, they destroyed the houses of many Congress workers, beat their relations and trampled under their feet the photos of Mahatma Gandhi and Jawahar Lal Nehru. At Baghmati, people destroyed a bridge named Jatmal. When the army arrived on the scene, the political prisoners were stripped naked and were shown the bridge and so severely thrashed that many of them could come to their senses only after many weeks. Among those who suffered was the President of Congress Committee of Samastpur sub-Division, Dr. D. N. Jha, Khadi-Bhandars at 14 places viz. Madaipur, Tarwara, Lahrai Sarai, Umgaon, Bajipur, Rajnagar etc. were either plundered or burnt down, causing a huge damage worth Rs. 30,000 or Rs. 31,000/-. 200 houses were burnt in a village named Deep. The Police Inspector of Madhubani, Mr. Rajbli and Mr. S. P. Tika, for all intents and purposes were the part and parcel of repression. Prior to the Movement they did not have much money about them. But during the days of repression they hoarded enough riches, which enabled them to build or purchase bungalows and big zamindaris.

#### 14—MAN BHUM DISTRICT

Arrests.	...	562
Detentions	...	133
Deaths	...	2
Convictions	...	342
Firings	...	at three places
Collective Fines	...	Rs. 34, 640/-

*Government Institutions attacked* 22

The heroes of Manbhum shed their innocent blood for the vindication of the honour of their mother-land. They suffered from all the orgies of repression, received *lathi*-blows and witnessed destruction of their property. In fact they set fire to their own funeral pyres.

Shri Atul Chandra Ghosh is the leader of Manbhum District Congress. It is because of his influence, sense of service and sacrifice that Man Bhum district in general and the Purulia sub-division in particular have many active Congress workers. With the cooperation of his co-workers and unstinted and undefeatable service of his people he had endeared himself to all and sundry and

turned the whole district Congressite. District Manbhum has always been at the beck and call of the Congress. The whole District plunged itself into the Movement as soon as the bugle was sounded in Bombay. The Santhals and Mahtos who form a majority in the District stood arrayed in the battlefield armed with bows and arrows, but on the instructions of Mr. Ghosh they left their arms and resolved to demonstrate their righteous indignation against the British, through non-violent means. The Movement, however, was carried on as directed. Its common feature was the hoisting of National flags, and organisation of *hartals* etc. which continued throughout the month of August. The tri-colour was hoisted on *thanas* of Bandban, Barabazar, the court in Raghunathpur and on educational institutions. In Dhanbad (Jharia) 76 persons were arrested for picketting.

The public of the District had heard the woeful tales of repression in other districts of the Province, and of repressive measures which were adopted by the Government and the sabotage and dislocation activities carried on by the public in retaliation. This incited the public of this district also. *Thanas* were attacked and those of Barabazar, and Bandban were burnt. Post-office in Barabazar, along with its official records and even the building was reduced to ashes. The road running from Manbazar to Purlia breached at many places. Efforts were made to set fire to military camps at Lalpur and Laghurama. Cutting of wires and destruction of liquor houses continued for many days.

The story of repression in the District is very similar to that indulged in other districts. At many places the police opened fire. Out of them three need special mention viz. Jargaon, Manuabhar and Kabras-garh.

#### 15—SING BHUM DISTRICT


Arrests	...	275
Convictions	...	172
Detentions	...	52
Collective Fines	...	Rs. 2264

Workers living in 'mill area' of this District took a great part in the Movement. They participated in almost all the peaceful demonstrations. 30,000 mill-workers of Tata Steel Co., Jamshedpur and 5,000 workers of other Companies, as a protest against the arrest of

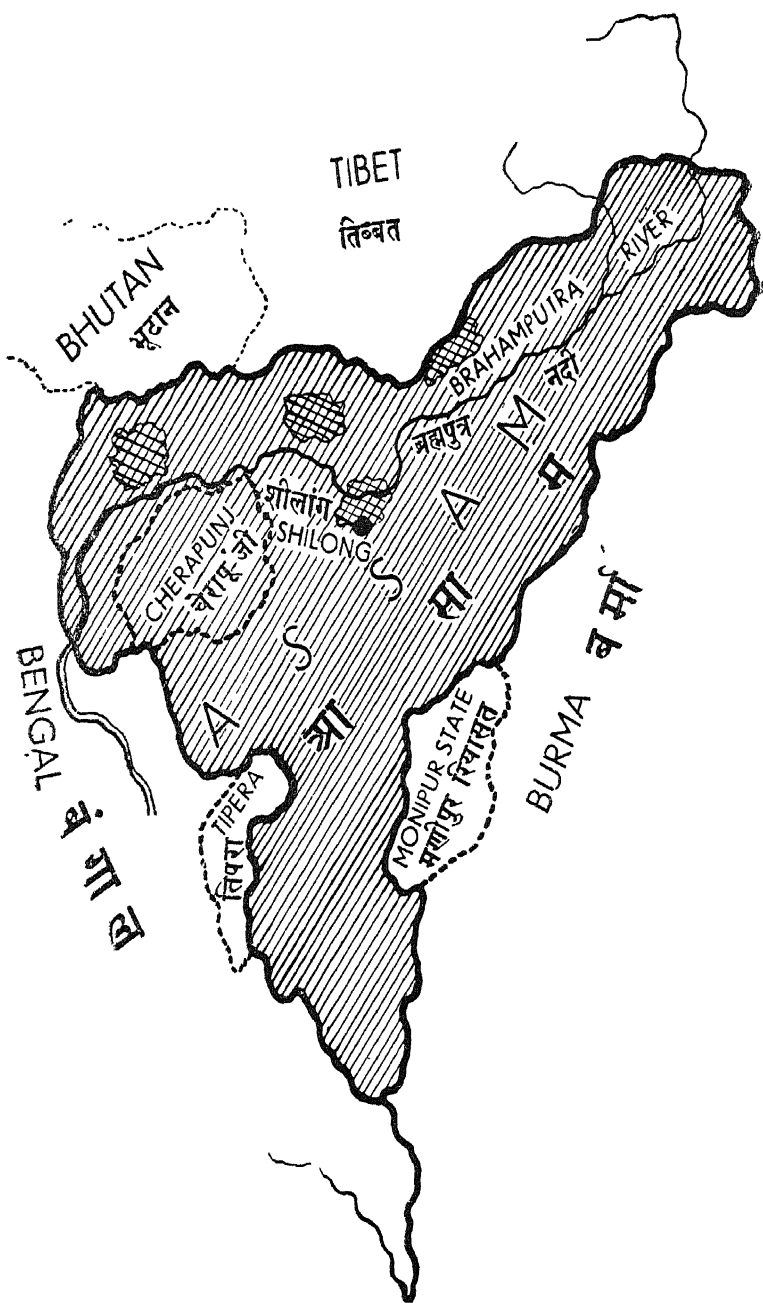
their leaders, started a general strike from August 20 and continued expressing their resentment in various other peaceful ways for full 13 days. Since these workers had more Congress leanings than communistic ones, they remained non-violent throughout. A detailed narrative of this strike has already appeared elsewhere. So beautifully and in such a non-violent manner did the labourers organise demonstrations that even some of the soldiers were very much moved and 28 of them laid down their arms and tendered their resignations.

There was full cooperation between the students and labourers throughout in these regions. Processions were taken out by the students who had left their educational institutions. Efforts were made to blow off the Bloom Bridge in Jamshedpur. Wires were cut near Ranchi.

A huge procession 15,000 strong was formed and taken out in Jamshedpur on the 6th of September. Most of the processionists were Harijans. Shouting national slogans the procession reached the jail-gates. The processionists asked the authorities to release their leaders for a moment so that they could have their *darshans*. The people were under the impression that their leaders were ill-treated in the jails. The Jail authorities were trembling in their shoes. They could not dare disregard the universal wish of the people. They conceded to their demand. The leaders were shown to the people. Finding their leaders hail and hearty, processionists were overjoyed. The leaders were laden with floral wreaths. Addresses were presented to them and after acclaiming their victory, they bade good-bye to their leaders. No better example of the success of a disciplined, peaceful and well-organised demonstration can be cited. The people did not like to indulge in sabotage and dislocation activities. There were only organised demonstrations over the arrest of their beloved leaders.







## CHAPTER V

### ASSAM

The area of Assam is 67,334 sq. miles and its population is 92,47,657.

*Facts about the movement:—*

Arrests	...	3531
Detentions	...	203
Convictions	...	1679
No. of persons killed	...	70 to 80
No. of persons Injured	...	about 1,000
Collective Fines imposed	Rs.	4,24,661
Collective Fines realised	Rs.	2,72,000
Sabotage cases	...	21
Derailments	...	6

Firing was resorted to at the following places: Dhekiajuli and Gohpur (in Tejpur District), Bebegia, Tunglababhugarh, Barapujia, Barhampur (in Nowgong District), Dhufidhara (in Goalpara District); and Sahali and Bajali (in Barpeta District).

Extensive *Lathi* charge was made at the following places:

North Lakhimpur, Dhalpur, Bihpuria, Dikhonghat, Tejpur, Bihali, Baspela, Shivsagar, Nitaipukharihat, Teok, Dergaon, Goalaghat, Goalpara and Nowgong,

Brutal *Lathi* charge was made at the following places:

Bebegia, Roha, Dhalpur, Bibpuria, Ranigaon, Rangsali, Chatia, Jamuguri, Bihaguri, Sarbhog, Dhupdhara, Teok, Kharikatia, Nitaipukharihat, Goalpara, and Chayagaon.

About 2 million people openly participated in this Rebellion,

## SOCIO-ECONOMIC BACKGROUND

Assam is situated in the East of Bengal. It was ceded to the British after the Burmese War in 1826, and is an alluvial plain, with ranges of hills spread along the Brahmaputra 450 miles long and 50 miles broad. The lowlands are extremely fertile and productive and the hills are covered with tea plantations. Under the Government of India Act, 1935, it has a bi-cameral legislature and the franchise has now been extended to women.

The high-hills of Assam are populated by the aborigines who form a considerable proportion of the population of the Province. Most of the tribes have been converted into Christianity. Literacy among them is fairly large, specially amongst Khasis. The inhabitants both male and female are literate and most of them have become perfectly Europeanised in fashion. The Angami Nagas have been very famous as guerillas and being head-hunters have been very hardy and capable soldiers. These tribal people have of late come into contact with people of lower valleys. Though under the influence of Christian Missionaries most of these tribal people were prone to think of themselves quite cut off and isolated from Indian political and social life. Since 1930, when the young and enlightened Rani Gaidalla took a prominent part in the public life of the Province, a stir and agitation permeated the entire Naga Hills. The People living in these various hills are very gay and hearty, and given to a life of ease and comfort, governed by their own customs and conventions.

The province is divided into three natural divisions viz, the Brahmaputra or Assam Valley, the Surma Valley and the Hills. The Assam valley includes the districts of Goalpara, Kamrup, Nowgong, Darrang, Shivasagar, Lakhimpur and the administered areas of Balipara and Sadia frontier tracts. The Surma valley includes the district of Sylhet and the plains portion of Kachhar district. This is the most thickly populated part of Assam.

The lower valleys are generally populated by settlers who had originally come to these regions as labourers from the other parts of India, specially from Bihar and Orissa. Very recently thousands of Marwadis have gone to Assam and taken up trade and commerce of the Province into their own hands, while Bengalis almost exclusively predominate Government services. The Assamese very much resent the outsiders controlling the life and property of the Province. That is the reason why during the 1942

Movement it was not the Marwaris or Bengalis or the Mymensing immigrants whose regular influx in the Brahmaputra valley had become a real problem of the Province, who took part in the Movement, but the Assamese who came to the fore and formed the vanguard of the Movement.

Assam has been so much dominated by the incoming people from other provinces that it is very easy for one to run away with the idea that the Movement could not be intense on a large scale in the Province, and that the masses or the Province could not have been very active participants in the Movement. But the fact remains that Assam has been one of the stormiest centres of the Movement and the Assamese, through their heroism and fortitude, sacrifices and sufferings, have made for themselves a permanent place in the history of India.

### ARREST OF CONGRESS LEADERS

The Assamese, on account of their religious temperament, introvertism, simple habits, undeveloped means of communications and transport, geographical conditions and many other historical factors and traditions, are much suited to the Gandhian ways and ideology of life. Naturally, therefore, the constructive programme of Gandhiji with emphasis on self-sufficiency through spinning, and development of cottage industries, appealed to them so much. But the news of the arrest of Congress leaders in Bombay, coupled with repression that the officers in the province were indulging in, wounded the innocent pride of the people. Their blood boiled up, their indignation and wrath against the British who had already aggravated the economic and social maladies of the people became all the more pronounced. Alienated as the mass mind was on account of the bureaucratic rule, and exasperated as they were by what they considered to be a treacherous attack of the bureaucracy on their leaders, and for that matter on themselves, the people of Assam responded to the call of independence in a manner which could never be expected of them. The more the repression, the greater was their determination to end the British Rule. They were resolved to set up a parallel Government in the country. All Assamese, male and female, young and old, Hindus and Muslims, city dwellers and rural-folk, students and labourers, in short every Assamese, plunged in the battle for the freedom of the motherland. The whole province was roused and there was hardly any place, ex-

cept the hill districts, where this temper of complete defiance to the British authorities was not displayed in one form or the other.

It was quite natural too. All objective and subjective conditions for a mass revolution were present in Assam. The Assamese are a poor people but the war had made them poorer still. Most of them were forcibly evicted from their lands where aerodromes were to be constructed. There was no compensation, or very little of it was paid to the poor people. It affected the poor families in Debrugargh and Tejpur sub-divisions economically and large number of families, running into thousands fell victim to military rapacity. The civil administration was sub-serving the military ends. Lakhs of soldiers were concentrated on the eastern borders of Assam and the province was declared the eastern base of Allied forces. These soldiers not only looted and plundered the villages, but also took away with them articles of daily necessities, like 'ghee' butter milk, vegetables etc., free of cost, and even molested the women and girls working in the fields and jungles of Assam. Forced loans and war contributions attended by many restrictions imposed on the social life of the people, embittered their feelings and they were impatiently waiting for the day when the Congress would give them the call, and invite them to strike at the British. The call did come, if not directly from the mouth of the Congress leaders, it came in the form of the news of their arrest by the bureaucracy. The invitation to fight was extended, not by the Congress, but by the bureaucracy.

### THE CONGRESS AND ASSAM

As stated above, Assam was temperamentally, historically and geographically suited to Gandhiji's programme of village self-sufficiency. Naturally, therefore, the message of the Congress and its ideology was well received by the rural folk of Assam. Even the labourers poor and cut off from the social life of the province, clung to the Congress with the hope that one day their employers would be impelled by changing political & social conditions to give them their due. The Congress rank and file in Assam was mostly composed of middle class educated men and women who were very much politically conscious and had the vision of a progressive and free India before them. But the upper class too was not altogether deaf to the cries of agony of their motherland. They also lent their support to the national cause in some way or

the other. The Assamese Muslims were under the influence of Jamiat-ul-ulema. Even in the districts of Sylhet and Kachnar the Jamiat had its influence felt. More than 400 persons in Sylhet went to Jail in 1942. The people of Assam were perfectly non-violent in their out-look. They had implicit faith in the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi. The first Non-Cooperation Movement found its echo among the enthusiastic sons of most aristocratic families of the Province who plunged into the movement heart and soul. Even the poor peasant living in a modest hamlet was prepared to fight for the Nation's cause.

### THE CHARACTER OF THE MOVEMENT

As elsewhere, the 'open rebellion' of 1942 began with peaceful demonstrations, processions and meetings formed by the people, held to express the universal indignation against the British. There were widespread '*hartals*' in the Province which extended its tentacles even to remotest villages. Students left schools and colleges in their thousands and participated in peaceful demonstrations. The people usually formed processions; marched on for miles together, holding aloft the tri-colour, shouting patriotic slogans and 'quit India', surrounded the Government institutions, *thanas*, Railway stations, post offices, etc. and endeavoured to hoist the National flag on them. But in its initial stages the Movement was perfectly non-violent, even the attack by the organised masses on public buildings and institutions was a non-violent one, though the custodians of law and order fired on the innocent, and innocuous masses.

It is estimated that about two-thirds of the population of the Province actually took part in the Movement. For four months the Government machinery was completely paralysed. Police, both armed and civil ceased to perform their duties in any other way except marching in dozens into the storm centres of the revolt and do all that was conceivable to disorganize them. For all practical purposes the people formed themselves into many patrolling units, in order to defend the life and property of their brothers. The judges and the magistrates, much as their activities were confined to the trial of men and women arrested for breaking laws and other regulations, were found by the people too wooden and incompetent to acquit themselves well. So in most places the people set up their own *panchayats* and jails where trials were held, revenue was raised through the sale of *hats*, fisheries,

etc., etc. Nothing was allowed to come in their way, and those who violated the *panchayat* rules were punished.

The Movement assumed two forms, in accordance with two distinctive methods employed, with a common war-cry. The first form adopted was constructive, and was to run on perfect non-violent lines with a view to make the villagers self-sufficient through many constructive activities outlined for the nation by Mahatma Gandhi and the second was obstructionist which did not rule out the possibility of the masses being very violent. For the fulfilment of the first aspect of the Movement, it was thought necessary that the people and the produce of the villagers should not be allowed to go out of their possession to be utilized by the military and the civil authorities. Transport of paddy, cattle, and vegetables when attempted by the fifth-columnists was met with strong resistance by the volunteers and in order to frustrate such mean attempts completely, P.W.D. highways were breached. Even carts and other vehicles belonging to pro-government village-folk became the target of people's ire and suffered considerable damage.

### THE SHANTI SENA

The callousness and inefficiency displayed by the bureaucracy in the Province in handling the wide-spread epidemics caused by the influx of evacuees from Burma, and by other sufferers left the people helpless. But fortunately a volunteer organisation was soon formed which came to the rescue and relief of the people. It was the 'Shanti-Sena' which had its branches in every village and was working out the programme of self-sufficiency, self-defence, communal amity and other social activities. Started in the month of July, the 'Shanti Sena' soon became an organisation to count with. Its number throughout the Province swelled to about 20,000 embracing most of the villagers in Assam, and although most of them were not trained except perhaps the Naiks, the numerical strength itself was indicative of the popularity of the organisation brought about by the scope and yeomen's service rendered by this organisation to the Province.

Even during the Movement 'Shanti-Sena' stuck fast to its guns and despite crude and repressive measures adopted by the Government against it, the 'Sena' continued to be of great service to the people. The volunteers were scattered throughout the Province and in every village they had their camps. Whenever they were

informed that any village was in danger, they would at once rush in for its defence. They would keep all villages in a state of preparedness to face any contingency. Many brave volunteers died in the defence of life and property of the villagers and many of their camps were burnt down but they continued functioning as people's watch dogs undeterred and unwearied. Tilak Deka and others were fired on but till their last breath they kept on sounding bugles of freedom urging the people to be on their alert. A detailed description of the sacrifices and services of the 'Shanti-Sena' is given in the following pages.

### FURY OF THE MOVEMENT

On the 9th August when the news of the arrest of leaders reached Assam, the Movement started on perfectly non-violent lines. The people gave vent to their resentment and grievances against the administration by organising peaceful demonstrations and taking out processions. Nowhere were the rails dislodged or sabotage undertaken. There occurred a minor incident which was said to be primarily due to wild elephants running amuck. The Movement however gathered momentum at the beginning of September. Roads were blocked and breached at many places. Trains were derailed. Godowns, military and civil stations, forest bungalows, schools and other public buildings were either burnt or looted. There were in all about six derailments of trains according to police reports. Two of them caused serious loss of life and property. On or about the 26th of November a derailment of troops' train took place only 14 miles away from Gauhati Railway station. Government reports of death and injuries do not tally with the evidence of the eye-witnesses who put the casualties, both killed and injured, at not less than 150. Over and above, country bombs were freely used. Many colleges, telegraph offices and railway platforms were damaged with the help of these bombs. Such sabotage and dislocation activities were frequent and spread all over the districts of Assam. Of all the six districts of Assam the movement was at its zenith in the district of Nowgong at the time when Gandhiji had undertaken his fast. There was much truth in the strong views taken by Premier Gopinath Bardoloi, who held that not the insurgents but the war-mongers, the thoughtless and irresponsible legislators, officers who indulged in ruthless orgies of repression, and those who freely took to loot and pillage

were responsible for those violent activities, which were made more frequent by mutual hatred and personal enmity.

## NON-VIOLENCE IN THE MOVEMENT

As stated above the Movement of 1942 was mostly non-violent in character in the Province of Assam but the people of Tejpur sub-division made their unique contribution worthy of record. The bravery, discipline and spirit of non-violence shown by these people stand unrivalled in the history of the world. From other districts also hundreds of instances worth recording would be found to illustrate the attitude of the people on the one hand and the dastardly and mean exhibition of the bureaucratic wrath on the other. Completely disarmed and peaceful mass rallies of men and women, young and old, were fired upon at many places, particularly at Dhekiajuli, Behala, and Gohpur. How cheerfully did the people meet such heartless attacks is evident from the narrative of the Movement given in Darang District. Here dwelling in detail upon one incident of paramount importance, would suffice. Muktapur was 16 miles north of Gauhati, across the Brahmaputra and the police-station was only 8 miles away from that place. A prominent Congress worker Shri Mahendra Nath Deka, the Vice-Chairman of Gauhati Local Board was presiding over a mass meeting of about 5,000 men and women. Having come to know about the meeting a Daroga with a posse of armed police arrived at the spot and ordered the dispersal of the meeting and arrest of Sjt Deka. But the villagers refused to obey. They did not budge an inch and at the same time would not permit the police to arrest their President, who according to them was their 'King' at the time, and as such, could not be arrested by anybody. They refused to recognise the authority of the British Government. The *Daroga*, who was drunk with power, ordered firing. But before the constables could carry out his orders they were overwhelmed by the people and forced to lay down their guns. They, however, did not inflict physical injury on the police. Sjt. Deka asked the people to be non-violent and let him be arrested. True to the spirit of a non-violent soldier he was about to surrender himself to the police when the people cried "No, it cannot be allowed. It is a people's day. They want to arrest you. They may come to-morrow." They surrounded their leader so that no-body could harm him. The *Daroga*,

too, with the police posse left for his *thana*. The meeting was dispersed and Sjt. Dekaji was escorted back to his home. True to the promise that his people had given to the *Daroga* Sjt. Deka offered himself for arrest the next day. Some 15 to 20 other Congressmen were also arrested. Sjt. Deka was sentenced to one year's imprisonment; and, 13 other so-called 'rioters' were sentenced to various terms of imprisonment ranging from 3 to 9 months. It was exactly in this manner that another crowd surrounded a police force and left it unhurt. The Police constables were only compelled to participate in the demonstration. These were indeed peculiar instances of the non-violent struggle that the Assamese put up during those great days of 1942. The people of Assam defied the British authority in every manner without causing any loss of life or physical injury.

### WOMEN'S ROLE

There was great upheaval among the women of Assam and they took more prominent part in the Movement than men. Their activities were entirely of a non-violent character. They stood side by side with their men folk and faced firings, '*lathis*' and bayonet charges. At many places like Brahampur, Gohpur, Barapujia, Teok etc. it was the women who first faced military and the armed police by pushing to the front. They led almost all the processions. It was again the women of Assam, under the leadership of Shrimati Amal Probha Das, who were the first to openly enter the areas, which were the targets of shooting, *lathi charges* and excesses of other types by the police, thus encouraging those who were oppressed. There was a ban imposed on the visiting of such places, but the women agitators, led by Amal Probha, entered those areas; moved from village to village in practically all the districts of Assam; held meetings and explained to the people how they were to meet the situation which was very grave. Shrimati Pushplata Das had organised the women throughout Assam before the August repression came on. She was arrested and made a security prisoner with her husband Sjt. Omeo Kumar Dass.

Similar demonstrations by ladies were held throughout the province. It seemed that the women's Association with national service as its ideal had become a permanent feature. In this period of panic caused by beastly ravages of the military in Upper Assam, a strong organisation was ably functioning under the leadership of

Shrimati Annaprobha Boruah, Sudhalata Dutta and others, which defended the people against these attacks and rendered other help to them.

At Bajalli about 3000 women assembled together to celebrate the Independence Day. The meeting was presided over by Chandra Prabha Saikia. The police arrived on the scene. The sub-Inspector ordered dispersal of the meeting but the ladies were adamant. The police then proceeded to arrest Shrimati Chandra Prabha. She was dragged, her clothes were torn and with only her bodice on she was taken to the *thana*. She had to trudge 3 miles half nude and with several bruises on her person. The miscreants made several attempts to arrest some other ladies but the meeting did not disperse in spite of it and concluded only when its usual proceedings were over.

During this great 'open rebellion' the women of Assam formed themselves into several batches so that they could resist the evil-intentioned police. Some women like Kumari Kanak Lata, Tuleswari etc. laid down their lives and thus attained martyrdom.

## *TWO UNIQUE SACRIFICES*

### 1. SHRI KAMAL CHANDRA MIRI

By his sacrifice Shri Kamal Chandra Miri has created a unique record and has won for himself, an enviable place in the history of Indian independence. There is only one such other name in India's history of a hero, who did long ago what K. C. Miri did during the great days of August upheaval. Maharana Pratap Singh of Mewar shed his blood for every inch of his motherland and suffered throughout life untold miseries. He kept unassailed the honour, and undiminished glory, of his motherland. Sjt Miri's sacrifices were, in no case, less than those of this great personality of Indian history. It is no exaggeration to say that it is because of such heroes that India remains as the most shining planet in the constellation of nations.

Sjt. Kamal Chandra Miri was a member of Golaghat District Congress Committee. For many years past he had prominently figured in the political and social life of the district. He used to carry the message of the Congress to every home in the District. He belonged to Miri Tribe and had a great influence among his people.

He was an eyesore to the authorities who were on the lookout for a suitable opportunity to arrest him, which came to them with the beginning of the Movement. Sjt. Miri was arrested but since no charge could be established against him, the Magistrate was undecided about the award that he would give to Sjt. Miri. The magistrate, therefore, said to him, "I can let you off if you can give me an assurance."

"Assurance ! About what ?" asked Sjt. Miri "You must give up your association with the Congress", replied the Magistrate.

It was very hard for Sjt. Miri to relish these unpalatable words. He received from these words neither any comfort nor solace but provocation. "Stop here, sir ! no more of it. You cannot humiliate me any further. Never expect such things from me. I have shouldered the responsibility of Congress work not with any selfish motive. Then why should I give it up for a little of pleasure ? I have dedicated my life for Congress work. Please do not shame me by coaxing me in this way." retorted Sjt. Miri.

The Magistrate was thus rendered speechless and he awarded 8 months' rigorous imprisonment to Sjt. Miri. He was sent to Jorhat Jail. The insanitary conditions of living, inadequate ration etc. soon told upon his health and he fell ill. No provision was made for any medical treatment or medicines for him. His condition gradually deteriorated. After some days it seemed that all the oil of his lamp was finished and the flickering light of his life was soon to die out. He himself was conscious of it. The jail-authorities saw in it an opportunity of forcing his hands. They said to him. "We do not ask you to cut off your relations from Congress for ever. We only want you to give us an undertaking that when released on parole you will not participate in the Movement.

These words pierced into his heart. He could not tolerate this assault on his innocent pride. Without making an effort to get up from his bed he replied, "I prefer martyrdom to the release sought in a cowardly manner. To me honour is far more dear than life. It will be my proud privilege to die in the vindication of my honour."

These brave words of this young lad touched the authorities to the core. Stealthily they went away, but did not relax in their efforts to cajole him to surrender. Sjt. Miri, on his part, remained adamant. In the meanwhile his health suffered a gradual breakdown.

Before a day or two of his death, the jailor himself went to him and spoke some words of solace. Though dying Sjt. Miri felt deeply wounded at this and shouted at the jailor, "My sufferings are great and numerous. If I put up with them with cheer and joy it is not because I have any self-interest to seek. It is for you, for me and indeed for everybody that I am suffering. Then why do you ask me to do something impossible. I will never give an undertaking."

The brave young hero died in the jail, but refused to compromise his honour as well as that of his nation. Till his last breath he was seen happy and in his of spirits. Kamal Miri is no more in the world but his example and his name will always inspire the coming generations to sacrifice their lives for a dear and noble cause.

## 2. SHRI KUSHAL CHANDRA KUNWAR

Kushal Chandra Kunwar has gone down in Indian history as a man of immortal fame. He belonged to the brave Ahom community which ruled over Assam just before the British came. These Ahoms formed the bulk of Congress workers in the Upper Assam Districts. He was a Congress preacher and worker in Sarupathar area. He had a very highly developed sense of discipline and correctly interpreted to the people the programme and policies formulated by the Congress. He was implicated in Sarupathar derailment case because like Sjt. Miri he was the man who was most feared by the authorities. Kunwar Kushal Chandra was not even present at the scene of the derailment, and the police could not prove their case. Then he was charged for having said to the people that derailment and dislocation of rails formed an important item in the Congress programme. The case was presented to the D.C. All the officials had joined together against Kushal Chandra and his voice went unheard. In March 1943 he was sentenced to death. An appeal for mercy was made to the Governor which was not granted and the brave Kushal Chandra left his mortal frame on the 15th, June 1943.

During the period that he was in the jail and till the last day nobody except his wife, brothers and children were allowed to see him because the authorities were afraid lest the public should clamour for his release if somebody else saw him. Due to their personal influence Sjt. Gopinath Bardoloi and some other political prisoners were allowed to interview Kushal Chandra in the noon of

the 14th June. Sjt. Bardoloi was so much moved by what Kushal Chandra said to him that he gave a vivid description of his interview with Kushal Chandra in his own words. For the knowledge of the reader the purport of Sjt. Bardoloi's account of interview is given below:—

“We went to Shri Kushal Kunwar to see, if in his last moment we could bring any little consolation to him, but instead of being able to do anything of the kind, we not only came consoled ourselves, but brought with us an inspiration, which we wish should persist in us throughout our lives. It seemed to me that the last hours of his life with the impending death before him only perfected his “*Sadhana*” for salvation for which he was striving all his life. It seemed to me that what he said and the manner in which he uttered them could not come from a person who had not attained the position of a “*Sthita Prajnya*”. The serene joy that beamed through the expression of his face only a few hours before his death and the peace and quietness and an abiding faith in God, which his utterances gave expression to, completely overwhelmed me. I cannot surely put his language or his expressions into writing; but the following statement given at intervals is only an attempt at approximation of what he said.

“I am innocent of the offence for which I have been condemned. The sentence is in excess. I am a believer in Mahatma Gandhi and his creed of non-violence. For the last 17 years I have tried to live a non-violent life by living on vegetarian diet. I have even abstained from taking salt for the last nine years. How can I think of derailment of trains which involve the destruction of human life which is sacred to me, much less take part in it? It is true that as a Congress worker and being one of the very few literate men in that area I did explain to the people the Congress literature that came for them. In “Nams” and “Kirtans” I also used to discuss with the villagers “Dharma Katha” I know. And yet it is ordained that I should be thus sentenced. But I am not in the least sad or thoughtful (*Chintita*) about it. When out of about 400 or 500 men present in jail for the cause of the country. I have to accept this sentence, I do take it to be God's will and grace that he should have chosen me for it. I know that it is on account of the same will that my life could not be saved inspite of human efforts to do so through your kindness and of other generous persons.

I told my wife and children who were overwhelmed with grief when they first saw me, that if human effort had any power to save my life I would have been saved. To me therefore, there is nothing to be sorry. I must accept the inevitable '*Karmaful*'. Where is the room for grief or sorrow ?

In the same quiet cheerfulness he continued:

" 'Wherever there is life, there is death; and in the same way with all death there is life or resurrection. While I was born, I had to pass through agony for about one and a half hours, now it will not be even 15 minutes. My Atman is subject to nobody; none can do anything to it. You cannot do anything to it and not even the British Government. It was He who gave it and it is He who will now take it away' "

"After saying this, Kushal Konwar became silent and the assembly of Congress volunteers numbering about 200 bowed in silence before this unconquerable spirit. I could only mutter 'God is Anandam, and I find it present in you.' Kushal who was about 38 years at this time was yet uninitiated (i.e. had not accepted a religious preceptor) After a while he told his Holiness the Deka Satradhikar of Germur Satra, who was a security prisoner in Jorhat jail that he would like to be initiated. The Goswami initiated him then and there. The simple Vaishnavic ceremony which consisted in teaching the following formula. 'I surrendered myself to Him to His Holy Name, to the Spiritual Preceptor and to the Holy Community of Baktas' took only a few minutes.

"It was known that during the 3 months of his life in a miserable cell, he gained in weight. A copy of Geeta which was given to him by jail authorities was his constant companion (his own copy, a companion of 17 years, was kept by the magistrate during the trial). The warders who came to attend on him began to love and respect him. On the fateful morning it was raining rather heavily, and when at about 4. 30 a.m. the armed sentry headed by the Head warder went to his cell, he was still calmly asleep. They roused him and he got up immediately ready for the ordeal; and, as all the warders and jailors present there said, 'without the least falter in his voice or unsteadiness in his movements, he prayed for 5 minutes after the Superintendent of jail had read out the sentence to him, asking him at the same time to be immediately ready. He walked up to the platform, and sang the chant

that the Goswami had taught him the previous evening. Standing erect on the platform he prayed all to forgive him if he did anybody anything wrong or unpleasant. While the noose was being put round his neck he was heard muttering the same chant that he was muttering on the way. Within the twinkle of an eye the platform was resolved with a click and Kushal Kunwar disappeared from the company of worldly men for ever".

Another eye-witness gave the following description of the incident:

"In my childhood I used to read in history that people happily courted death for their patriotism. Then it used to occur to me as a fabricated tale, but as I saw Kunwar Kushal in his cell on the 14th June, 1943 my head involuntarily bowed down in reverence on his feet. He had a cheerful face. There was a smile on his lips and a glow in his eyes. History, in flesh and blood stood before my eyes. His last words still ring into my ears, 'He who is born shall surely die one day. I am glad that out of so many other people, His choice fell upon me. God loves me.'"

In order to sacrifice his life on freedom's altar happily - did he put the noose round his neck. The platform was removed. Faintly did he mutter, "*par kare Dina Nath sansar sagar*," (O God of poor! steer the boat of my life through this great ocean which is this world), and this great soul was thus extricated from the chains of slavery."

## STUDENTS

Like their brethren in other Provinces, students of Assam, male and female, left their schools and colleges, organised '*hartals*,' led processions and when the eminent leaders of the Province were arrested it was they who dominated the activities of the Movement. As a matter of fact the direction of affairs in many places soon passed out of the hands of the Congressmen and the youngmen and women, whose sympathies for the Congress were not always keen in ordinary times, began to take lead in many places. But, despite their youthful enthusiasm, they did not indulge in sabotage and other destructive activities until the unprecedented bureaucratic repression drove the movement underground.

They were responsible for publishing and distributing some literature from the beginning of September, 1942 till February 1943, passing as direction from the Congress,

laying down the following instructions to the insurgents:—

(1) Dislocation of communication involving cutting of telegraph and telephone lines and sometimes destroying roads and railways, thus paralysing the administration. (2) Derailment. (3) Destruction of Government buildings like police-stations, court-buildings through which the Government exercises its functions. (4) Establishment of parallel Government by organising their own *panchayats*, the village police etc.

The students took upon their shoulders the responsibility of carrying out this programme and it is to the great credit of this community that despite the torturous methods of repression used by the Government the students remained undaunted and did succeed in their noble venture, though for a short time only.

### REPRESSION

The story of the ruthless repression perpetrated upon the people of Assam will ever remain fresh in the memory of the people and will always remind them of the relentless, demoralised and bestial character of the British rule in India. With the Movement in August, severest form of repression was launched upon by the bureaucracy with the aid of the reserved police and military, to crush the uprising of the people which had penetrated into the remotest corners of the Province excepting, of course the hill districts. During the fateful months of August, September and October 1942, firing was resorted to by the police and military at 9 places and 28 people lost their lives. They were charged with having openly defied the British authority and attempted to take possession of the police stations. Brutal and indiscriminate assaults on members of the Shanti Sena and the villagers following in the wake of mass-arrest of the leaders, and long marches of the arrested people to *thanas*, were the order of the day. To elicit information about the absconders their relations belonging to both the sexes were tortured in flagrant disregard of their ages. Their homes were looted and even their women-folk were molested. Collective fine to the extent of 5 lakhs of rupees was imposed, and, excepting Gauhati sub-division, brutal methods were adopted to realise it. Houses and property were confiscated and even money in the banks was frozen.

Demoralisation of the Press in Assam was worse

than in any other part of the country. Repressive measures against the Press were taken with a view to muzzle its popular voice in regard to the occurrences taking place in Assam. Civil liberties of the people were curtailed to the extreme and even so-called 'popular' Saadulla Ministry of the Province was functioning as an autocracy, pure and simple, in complete disregard of the safety of the life and property of the people of Assam. Sir Saadulla was allowed to form Cabinet only on the express condition that he would carry out all the repressive measures hitherto taken recourse to by the British bureaucracy. It is doubtful whether even in Czarist Russia the bureaucracy had behaved in any way worse than or adopted methods very different from those adopted by the British bureaucracy in India. Even the prisoners, the overworked Congressmen and women leading a quiet life in the jail premises, were tortured. Sanitary conditions were very poor. Pots and pans were scarce. Blankets of a very poor quality were supplied to the prisoners and they were forced to drag on with their miserable existence in the long winter-nights of December and January in the jails which were situated at high altitudes. The harrowing tale of woes and sufferings of the prisoners of Jorhat jails and the tortures they were subjected to especially on the 24th February, 1943 were simply unimaginable. Could the British Government that boasts of a super-fine culture and civilisation bend so low? But unfortunately the story is too true and the crime of the prisoners was that being too much worried about their beloved Mahatma Gandhi's fast they had gathered together to offer prayers to God for his survival from the ordeal. The sacrifices of the people of Assam would always inspire the coming generation to lay down their lives at the altar of the freedom of their motherland in a completely non-violent manner.

#### UPPER ASSAM

	<i>Lakimpur District</i>	<i>Shivsagar District</i>
Arrests	311	340
Convictions	214	287
Detentions	19	236
Collective Fines — Amt. Imposed		Amt. Imposed
	Rs. 10,000	Rs. 1,40,200
	Amt. Realised	Amt. Realised
	Rs. 9708-6	Rs. 73,334

There was a complete round-up of almost all the important leaders in these two districts. Still the people of Upper Assam did not hesitate to express their indignation against the British authorities. At many places they made strong demonstrations against the wholesale arrest of their beloved leaders. In Jorhat and Shivsagar large demonstrations before court buildings were held and volunteers picketted at the gates, forbidding the people to go to the courts. Meetings were held in all the towns and moffussil areas. Both at Jorhat and Shivsagar it was the calm and tactful behaviour of an Indian D.C. which prevented clashes between thousands of men and women on the one side and the police with armed force on the other. It was probably for this reason that the D.C. was transferred to some other place to make room for a European D. C. After that the police had their own way in suppressing the people and partially succeeded in crushing their spirit.

At Shivsagar on or about the 20th September 1942, a mass demonstration of at least 80,000, men and women was held. The processionists entered the town with flags and shouted slogans denouncing the British rule. Though the military had blocked all roads leading to the town at various places, the mob succeeded in breaking through the cordon. The military soldiers and armed police, without the least regard for law and decency, assaulted the people. At Polytechnical Institute at Jaysagar there was an affray between the military and the people and as a result 19 persons were so seriously injured that they had to be treated for seven days at the Shanti-Sena Camp at Shiv Sagar. Thereafter, the military and the police on the one hand and the people on the other openly attacked each other. The military and the police confronted an assembly which was still in the process of being formed into a huge procession. Both the parties were about to come to clashes. But the aforesaid Indian Deputy Commissioner made timely intervention and prevented bloodshed by holding tactful consultation with the leaders of the assembly which resulted into partial dispersal of the crowd and complete retirement of the police and the military.

The Movement in these places, as a reaction to the arrest of the leaders, apart from meetings and demonstrations of peaceful nature was, in most cases, of two types. (1) Constructive, to make the village units ready to declare independence within a specified period and

establish the *panchayats* and (2) obstructive, to stop all supplies from the villages being made to the military or Government contractors appointed for purchasing such articles as cattle, goats, poultry, milk and vegetables.

In *Panchayats* the representatives of all the village-units participated at Charigaon, Hattigarh and Teok. parallel independent governments were established and run on civilised lines. All the people who violated the sanctity of the rules and regulations framed by these *panchayats* were-penalised. This infuriated the authorities who could not get supplies of their daily necessities from these villages. They started arresting the leaders and making *lathi* charges on the people. 50 persons received permanent injuries on their persons; and a large number were slightly injured. Most of them were respectable citizens.

The incident that took place near the Teok police station is worth noting. This area was known to be the strong-hold of the Congress and the people were held by the Police to be responsible for the many obstructions put in the regular military supplies coming from the east by the Trunk Road. The people of Teok organised a huge demonstration which only made the *Daroga* more firm in suppressing them. He was trying for many days to find out an excuse to make an attack on the people. Men and women of the neighbouring villages numbering over 3,000 gathered in the Congress Office which was not very far away from the *thana* building. Not satisfied with the number of armed constables under him the *Daroga* requisitioned the military from the town which was only 16 miles from Teok by the road. The combined force of the military and police armed with *lathis* and bayonets attacked the unarmed crowd of men and women for having defied the dispersal order. As usual the military and the police authorities tried to snatch away the National flags which were in the hands of some of the ladies but the ladies showed remarkable courage and refused to part with their flags though they were faced with flashing bayonets and heavy *lathis*. As a result of the charge, two persons received bayonet wounds, and about 20 men and women were otherwise injured. Sjt. Shashi Dhar Molia Barua, one of the leaders, received serious injuries. The crowd dispersed. The prominent workers were arrested and cases were instituted against them. The trial continued for 8 months. 13 Congressmen, many of whom were old veterans received sentences of rigorous imprisonment ranging from 21 months to 2 years,

According to the government communique, on the night of 1st and 2nd November, a bungalow belonging to a manager of Titabar, the Middle English School at Amuguri, Private Girls' School and the branch Post-Offices at Dimow and Titabar were burnt. From the 3rd November to the 12th November at many places, schools and post offices were reduced to ashes and wires were cut. In February 1943, near Lakua Railway Station a passenger train was derailed, causing death to many and injuries to others.

Since in the districts of Shivsagar and Lakhimpur firing was resorted to at very few places some people thought that there were very few activities in connection with the 'open rebellion'. This was an erroneous view and was far from truth. In fact, not only the people out-side the jail were harassed by the police and the army but also the political prisoners were subject to very harsh and inhuman treatment. Inadequate ration and clothing, insanitary living conditions and regular flogging of political prisoners fell to the lot of the inmates of the Jorhat jail. As a protest against this unusual practice there was a general hunger strike for a day. The authorities reacted to it in a much worse manner. They never wanted that any act of defiance to their authority should be decided upon by the prisoners. They were waiting for a suitable opportunity to strike at the politicals. On the 24th of February, these politicals received the news of Gandhiji's fast and also that his condition was getting precarious in jail. These prisoners assembled together and prayed for the safety of Mahatma's life. Some of them were busy with their daily prayers and others were taking food in the dining halls. All of a sudden a fire alarm was raised and the *chaukidars* who were armed with *lathis* for the occasion ran out of their houses with *lathis*. The Reserve police also, who had been summoned for the same purpose ran towards the dining hall and made an indiscriminate *lathi-charge* on the inmates of the jail. Blood gushed out of the persons of the prisoners and the floor of the whole hall became red. The raiders did not stop here. They broke open the gates of all the wards except of one in which prominent leaders were lodged, rushed inside and beat them left and right. Forty persons received fatal injuries, skulls of 15 were broken and the number of those who received severe blows on hands, feet, breast and waist and other parts of the body was far greater.

Next morning when Sjt. Gopinath Bardoloi and other prominent leaders came to know of that night's happenings they persuaded the authorities to institute an enquiry into the matter. At the place, which was said to have caught fire, the half burnt wooden girders and pieces of gunny bags soaked with kerosene oil were found out clearly indicating that the authorities had connived at the clever ruse and that the fire-alarm was only a pretext to beat the prisoners and there was no such place which had actually caught fire.

In the sub-division of north Lakhimpur, an out of the way place, similar attempts were made by the police to crush the national enthusiasm of the people for the freedom of their country. At Narainpur one Allied aeroplane crashed. The S.D.O. called upon the people of the locality to keep watch over the place and render other services to the persons who were engaged for repairing the plane. Since the authorities had held the people as suspects, and charged them with having stolen the broken parts of the plane the former as a protest refused to keep watch and render other services. For this disobedience they had to pay a heavy price. This place being the centre of Congress workers, this action, on the part of the villagers was interpreted as a 'revolt' against the existing authorities. Armed soldiers were sent round the village to arrest the people. They resorted to merciless beating of the people, molested the women of the village and subjected the arrested people to all manner of inhuman indignities and physical tortures.

As a result of the orgies of repression, the Movement went underground and the people took to sabotage activities. Such destructive activities continued upto 1943 when the Gandhi-Viceroy correspondence was published.

#### *1--NOWGONG DISTRICT*

Arrests	...	1600
Convictions	...	1200
Detentions	...	60
Collective fines imposed		Rs. 87,000
Amount realised		Rs. 54,318

The Movement was intense and pervaded the entire district. All the villagers and town-dwellers of this district took part in the Movement and showed great

enthusiasm. They formed themselves into batches and sounded bugles whenever a danger was apprehended. Ancient and archaic methods were employed to defend themselves. This district was the centre of almost all the brisk activities of the Shanti-Sena. The example set by the people of Barapujia and their leader, Tilak Deka, is unique.

Barapujia is a village which is 3 to 4 miles to the interior of Grand Trunk Road. It had been the centre of all kinds of constructive activities of the Congress for the past 21 years. A fair proportion of the population consisted of simple tribal people of the plains. Being a centre of constructive activities it was also a centre of Shanti Sena Organisation for that part of the country.

When the military would enter the village at night the 'Shanti-Senas' would keep watch under the guidance of their leader, Tilak Singh. It was a part of the duty of Shanti-Senas to give signals to the villagers in case of an imminent danger. When the military or police, with their rifles, were within sight the brave leader blew his horn as the final signal. The military captain with his revolver aiming at Sjt. Deka warned him to refrain from guerilla tactics else he would lose his life. But he said that he must carry out the duties entrusted to him and blew his horn again. This was considered enough offence for Tilak Singh to lose his life. He was fired on at a very close range by the military captain. Sjt. Deka fell down dead.

The sound of the bugle followed by firing brought men and women of the village out of their beds. Learning that their brave leader had been shot dead, they rushed to the spot, and surrounded the military with torches in their hands. Women were the first to offer themselves to be killed or arrested. The cowardly police again fired and wounded five or six men. The military threatened them with further firings and fixed their bayonets to make a charge on them. Tilak's body and head were secured by the people in the mean-while; and while wild threats and unlawful trespasses were still in operation and the people were being harassed and indiscriminately beaten by the police, Tilak's body was being carried to the village by his compatriots. In the morning some 300 villagers were arrested and taken to *thana* where they were kicked and beaten and then let off. But some 10 persons, the leading men of the village, were taken into custody.

Kamrup, otherwise, a backward locality, was the scene of many peaceful processions and demonstrations during these days. At the arrivals of the trains the crowds used to shout slogans crying down British Government and the military. Sometimes troops passing by the trains in large numbers used to join the chorus of '*Gandhiji-ki-jai*' and '*Swadhin Bharat-ki-jai*'.

On one occasion, a military officer tried to snatch away the Congress flag from the hands of the leader of the processionists and the people offered stiff resistance. The *Daroga* of the Police Station, was ordered by a senior officer to fire on the crowd. The *Daroga*, a Muslim officer, who evidently acted with more tact than violence refused to do so. Within three days of this happening the *Daroga* was suspended. Subsequently, arrests and house-searches, preceded by oppression were conducted on some villagers, and, some leaders were arrested on flimsy grounds.

Shanti-Sena had given head-ache to the Bureaucracy. It was so organised and was acquitting itself in such a remarkable way that the authorities thought that the '*status quo*' could not be maintained without destroying that organisation. The volunteers were haunted from village to village and their camps. One of the raiding parties led by a British Commander brought under arrest a large number of volunteers belonging to Shanti-Sena organization. The camp was set on fire. While the camp was being consumed by the wild flames the commander ordered his soldiers to beat the people under arrest. A brave little boy reprimanded the commander for the barbarous conduct. The commander thereupon flew in a rage and jumped upon the boy. He severely kicked and threw him into the burning fire. Fortunately the boy managed to crawl out of the fire and instantly some villagers removed him.

A far more serious trial awaited the people of Barhampur which lies five miles east of Nowgong town. This was one of the many places in which the people had a Congress office and a Shanti-Sena camp of their own. By August all these offices were occupied and locked by the police. But this did not deter the villagers from arranging a village feast on a particular evening on the site of the office and the camp. On the 16th September 1942 a large number of people, men, women and children assembled; many carried national flags. They sang patriotic songs while many others were busy arranging the

feast and cooking meals. The information of this demonstration and the feast reached the military and the police posted in the town. Shri Pratap Chandra Sharma, B.L., a prominent worker was proceeding in that direction. A batch of police and soldiers led, as it appeared from the Government report by Mr. Ruse, I.C.S. and Captain Finch of the Assam Rifles and Deputy Superintendent of Police soon followed in lorries and cars and arrived at the scene of occurrence. It was getting dark by the time. Some girls had national flags in their hands which were snatched away by some of the officers but one girl named Ratna Phookan; aged 15 resisted the Commander who was struggling to take possession of the National flag which she was holding. The mother of the girl, an old woman rushed at the commander and dealt a cut with a small bamboo branch on his face. This was enough to set ablaze the orgy of murder that followed. The old woman was shot by a pistol then and there by Cap. Finch. The crowd which now came forward to protect the girl led by Khagi Ram, Hazarika was then fired upon without any previous warning. Two more youngmen including Thegi Ram, aged 25 who stood there firm as a rock were put to death and several others were wounded. But the insurgents refused to move, and surrounded the dead and the wounded. After a short while the Superintendent of Police and the Civil Surgeon arrived there. The crowd, unarmed as it was, remained firm and calm. These officers made one more attempt to take possession of the dead and the wounded. The Civil Surgeon had to rest content with examination of the wounded people and then retired with P.S. The whole crowd remained there as firm as before. They kept a strict vigil over the dead throughout the night; bedecked their bodies with flowers; took snaps in the morning and carried their bodies to the burning *ghats* in a huge procession and consigned them to the funeral pyre.

Thegi Ram Bora and other martyrs have almost become legendary heroes. It is said that while dying, Thegi Ram bequeathed his entire property, consisting of his fountain pen and 10 pice, as a legacy to the Congress and Independent India. His wife expressed sentiments that would do credit to any woman in India. With her heart full of sorrow and face glowing, she said: "I feel glorified and proud on the death of my husband because he died for the cause of our motherland and now I am one of those wives who with their tears are washing the feet of mother India." The Barampur Bar severely indicted

the Government for having employed such harsh and inhuman methods of terrorism and cold-blooded murders and passed serious strictures on the administration.

According to the Government report the Forest Bungalow of Nowgong was reduced to ashes. On the night of 9th and 10th November, an attempt was made to take away files, hack-saws, sulphur etc, from a tea estate as these would come handy in removing fish-plates and doing other mischiefs. This showed that the Movement was intense and in full fury in the District.

The Government also did not lag behind in making use of all sorts of repressive measures to put down the rebellion. A reign of terror was established and the authorities began to commit all kinds of excesses imaginable. Even people passing through the railway tracks fell victims to police and military firing on trumped up charges of sabotage. But the only substantial charge that could be made against the villagers was that a batch of youngmen was found burning some paddy-grass over a wooden bridge near Bebejia, a village some 6 miles west of Nowgong town. This incident in itself was considered sufficient to justify any kind of atrocity that could be perpetrated on the villagers. On the 28th August some military and police soldiers remained in hiding in the water under the bridge. When a number of people of the village including some women came near the bridge at dusk they were shot down. Two of them were killed when somebody among the crowd shouted that the soldiers were in hiding under the bridge. The next day the same party of military police wantonly shot another youngman on a bridge near Roh, 59 miles from Gauhati. Not satisfied with merely killing them they fell upon innocent villagers of Bebejia on the plea of realising collective fines, about which no one knew anything at the time. They surrounded the village at midnight and brutally assaulted the women and the men who attempted to leave the village. Next day, the military police made all the villagers, about 400 in number consisting of men, women and children, march under strong cordon of armed police to the town police office, a distance of 9 miles in scorching heat. Some of the ladies belonged to highly respectable families. One such lady with a suckling only three days old was dragged with the result that the innocent child died within a few hours of this mass insult and the lady herself fell ill and remained confined to bed for many months.

Innocent teachers were severely beaten in Roh because the schools had been flying the National flags on their buildings for the past three to four years. The teachers of other institutions were also meted out the same inhuman treatment. At Roh a military officer while passing through the school, saw a tri-colour fluttering over the school building. He became furious at the sight, approached the school master and ordered him to remove the flag. The teacher was not prepared to dishonour the flag. He refused to remove it. Thereupon the teacher and his colleagues were flogged and beaten, while the students of the school, being on strike that day escaped the injury which their teachers were subjected to.

## 2-DARRANG DISTRICT

Arrests	...	430
Convictions	...	142
Detentions	...	8
Collective fines imposed	Rs. 45, 700	
Amount realised	Rs. 31,575-8-0	

The people of the district despite many provocations given and tense situation created by the bureaucracy who were intent upon putting down the rebellion, showed remarkable power of restraint and a highly developed sense of discipline. They asked the police authorities to meekly surrender themselves to the masses and be at their beck and call. But in return many rounds were fired on the people and many of them were thrown behind the prison bars. Women also did not lag behind in displaying their patriotism and spirit of sacrifice. They had their own baptism of fire and they rubbed shoulders with their menfolk on almost all the fronts of this open rebellion.

Innumerable were the sufferings of the people and multifarious were the methods they adopted to defy the British authorities. I single out Gohpur because of its innovations. On September 20, 1942 the people of Gohpur formed a procession some 500 strong and marched to the *thana* led by a girl, aged 14, with a national flag in her hand. Two or three boys and other youngmen followed them. A large crowd 5000 strong, had gathered in the premises of the *thana* to witness the unique drama. Between 12 and 3 P.M. the processionists came into the compound of the *thana*. The officer-in-charge of the *thana* Rebati Mohan Shom, who was with the armed police to

stop them, asked the girl Shrimati Kanak Lata Barua, to violate the law and get into the *thana*. It is said that Kanak Lata harangued the police officer to clear off and let the people take the *thana* under their possession, or keep himself and his men at the behest of the people and act as servants of the people, and not as an alien Government. She held that the *thana* belonged to the people. The *Daroga* cut short and asked her not to proceed and told her that if at all she disobeyed he would order firing. The girl asked her followers to march on undaunted and retorted that he could do his worst. Hardly did she go a step forward when the constable standing by the side of the *Daroga* pulled the trigger of his gun and shot her in the breast. Brave Kanak Lata fell dead. According to one report the youngman who followed her was also shot dead along with her. But according to another, as she fell dead he took the National flag in his hand from that of the dying leader but he too met with the same fate at the hands of the *Daroga*. One other youngman who was by the side of this brave girl also rushed forward to take the place of the dead heroes and received serious bullet wounds. One batch of volunteers succeeded in getting on to the top of the *thana* building and unfurling the tri-colour while the people were being fired at, dying and groaning in pain. The people shouted 'victory.' The tri-colour was fluttering high in the sky, and sacrifices of these martyrs and heroes did not fail to bear fruits.

According to the Government report only 9 persons were killed. But so ruthless and reckless was the firing resorted to, that responsible people like Shri Gopi Nath Bardoloi held that the number of dead persons was not less than 60. There are a number of people in Gohpur who even to-day bear the marks of inhuman physical tortures inflicted by the bureaucracy in the form of their mutilated and deformed bodies, which remind us of those glorious days in the annals of our history.

On the same day, at Dhekiajuli, and almost about the same time another orgy of murder of innocent men and women, indiscriminate and murderous attacks and outrageous assaults on the modesty of women, were indulged in by the *Daroga* of Dhekiajuli *thana*, and his armed police, and the military which he had requisitioned from the town. The date of occurrence was a bazar-day; therefore, a concourse of people had particularly gathered round the *thana* which was at a stones throw from the *bazar*. This incident, as reported by an eye-witness,

began with the formation of a procession led by some youngmen with flags and proceeded towards the *thana*. The *Daroga* of the *thana* like that of Gohpur *thana*, asked the people to disperse or else he would order firing, and the reply of the leaders of the procession was almost similar to the one made by Shrimati Kanak Lata. The volunteers who were peaceful in every manner and had no arms with them wanted to enter the premises of the *thana*. But no sooner did they do so, they were met by a volley of fire from the armed police. A volunteer continued his onward march un-deterred, got into the *thana* and hoisted the National flag, but was soon shot dead.

A large number of immigrant Muslims who were kept in ambush by the police in the premises of the *thana* were let loose on the people. Six or seven persons were killed on the spot and several were injured. In this melee no distinction was made between the processionists and the spectators. The immigrants fell upon the crowd with their *lathis*. Many men and women fell under the weight of their blows. The armed police and these ruffians chased the innocent Kachari and labour women, belaboured and assaulted them. Hardly was the brutal attack over than the military commanded by white men, arrived at the scene and without trying to appreciate the situation indulged in indiscriminate firings. They mistook the *bazar* people for Congress workers. Overwhelmed by consternation and fear, the men and women fell pell-mell. Some wounded people in their attempt to escape, aggravated their injuries and subsequently died. Sixteen persons died at the spot including 3 women, one of whom was pregnant, and many more were wounded.

The people of Gohpur and Dhekiajuli who demanded the withdrawal of the police from the *thanas* on moral grounds, were thus tortured and many of them were literally butchered. But bureaucracy was not content even with such inhuman acts. 29 of the processionists were prosecuted. The trial lasted for six months. The magistrate found only three persons guilty and sentenced them to various terms of imprisonment ranging from 6 to 9 months for holding unlawful assembly and acquitted the rest. He seriously condemned the wanton killing of men by the police. The Magistrate characterised the police action as indiscriminate, cowardly and sweeping. In order to defend their case the Local Government

moved the High Court to enhance the sentences, and convict the acquitted ones and thereby wanted to expunge the distasteful remarks of the Magistrate. The High Court, however, did not interfere with the judgement delivered by the Magistrate. The judgement was published with short comments by the Assam Tribune, The Amrit Bazar Patrika and the 'Hindustan Standard'. These papers too had to pay penalty and were prosecuted under D.I.R. As regards the Gohpur incident the Magistrate convicted only one person for technical offence of trespass and sentenced him to three months' R.I. The Magistrate remarked in the course of his judgement that the mob was practically non-violent. As the news of the police atrocities on the people of Gohapur and Dhekiajuli reached Tejpur, the local leaders convened a meeting on the 21st September to express public indignation against the police excesses. The police with guns and bayonets guarded and blocked all the roads leading to the town from about 2 o'clock in the afternoon but a large number of people had already forestalled the police, and had assembled in the town. Most of the people were beaten at the entrance of the town. Still the meeting that was held in the evening was attended to by more than 2000 persons. It was nothing more than an ordinary meeting which was completely peaceful and the people were entirely unarmed. This did not, however, prevent the police from making a *lathi*-charge. A large band of police with *lathis*, guns and bayonets was brought in at the spot and the whole meeting was surrounded. Many a time the people were ordered to disperse. But nobody would listen to it. Enraged at it, the police made an indiscriminate and murderous attack. Hundreds were wounded, and those who tried to run away to save their lives were caught and assaulted.

Incidents which occurred on the same fateful day, 20th September, at Chhotia and Baheli Police Stations, stand a contrast to the happenings mentioned above. A crowd of about 5000 people with a fair proportion of women held similar demonstrations round about and even inside the premises of the *thanas* and without an opposition hoisted the National flag. The officials of both the *thanas* acted prudently and did not interfere, with the result, that the crowd dispersed peacefully with the conviction that they had emerged triumphant in the battle of freedom. The bureaucracy, however, could not tolerate the idea that the people shall feel triumphant and so they

decided to subdue them. Consequently attacks were made on the people in the evening. A reign of terror was established. People of neighbouring villages were also subjected to a very cruel form of oppression under many plausible pretexts. The Gurkhas and Military police broke into the houses of the villagers; insulted the women-folk, beat and wounded the people, ran away with jewellery and destroyed utensils and other articles.

In the course of realising collective fines, high-handedness and force were resorted to in a manner that has already been referred to in connection with the Movement in the Nowgong District.

### 3-KAMRUP DISTRICT

Arrests	...	955
Convictions	...	914
Detentions	...	43
Collective Fines imposed		Rs. 66,011
Amount realised	...	Rs. 17995-5-9

Like other districts of Assam, non-violence and a well-developed sense of discipline, characterised the activities of the people in the beginning in connection with the 'open-rebellion' of 1942. Volumes could be written on the high sense of non-violence and patriotism which was displayed by Shri Mahendra Nath Deka and other workers of Muktapur village, to which a reference has already been made. These people have a place of their own in the history of the world. I need not repeat the story of their resistance and perfect sense of discipline.

Bajjalli in Barpeta sub-division of the District was undoubtedly a congress-minded area comprising a territory of some 100 sq. miles, thickly populated. It was another centre of constructive activities in the district. On the 25th of September, 1942, there were mass meetings at three places, viz., Jolah, Chaukhuti and Nityanand, all within the jurisdiction of Patacharquchi Police Station. The authorities could not tolerate even the peaceful demonstrations organised by workers who had strong reasons to be critical of the activities of the authorities. Two meetings were attended by the 2nd Officer and A.S.I. of the *thana*. The meetings dispersed, as usual, peacefully. The Officer Commanding was coming back to the *thana* and on the way he met some men who had already come back from

the meeting and were resting on the roadside. The Officer could not tolerate even this much freedom and suspected the people of planning some other mischief. He ordered them to disperse but the people thinking that they were neither in an assembly nor intent on any mischief, refused to do so. Whereupon he himself fired and killed two men on the spot, namely Madan Chandra Varman, a student of class VII of Baijalli H.E. School and Rawat Ram Dass of village Sadari. The *Daroga* proceeded and met another party of the villagers who had similarly come back from another meeting. Finding himself faced with a similar situation, he resorted to firing there too, killed two persons and wounded many more.

At a place named Pathshala the people attacked the *thana*, kept it under their possession for full one day and hoisted the National flag.

Provoked by the repression and the atrocious behaviour of the police and the military, they took to destructive activities, and attacked many aerodromes. They made no secret of their intentions and freely destroyed whatever they could. They did not want to act as burglars or thieves. Like true patriots they wanted openly to plunge themselves into the nation's war for liberty. On the 29th August they made an attack on the aerodrome at Sobhag. For many days, before the Movement started, the aerodrome had been under construction and the *thekedars* had collected many things such as foodgrains etc. at the place. A huge mob attacked it and set the store on fire. Three I.E.M.S. Lorries which were standing by at the place, suffered the same fate but the fury of the mob was in no way abated. They proceeded further and set ablaze the inspection bungalows and other quarters. The flames rose so high up in the sky that the S.D.O. from his bungalow, situated at a distance of 16 miles could see them. He rushed towards the scene of occurrence but was frustrated in his attempt as there was neither a boat nor a boatman at the *ghat*. He took to another route, but the people had already blocked all roads and tracks leading to the aerodrome, making the movements of military and the police impossible. For many hours the fire continued blazing till everything was reduced to ashes. An estimate of the loss of approximately rupees 2 lakhs was made.

According to the Government report, on the 3rd of November, boulders were placed on the railway lines, and some sleepers were removed from it. On the 7th of

November, 12 Public Works Department cars loaded with gravels etc. were stopped by the women volunteers. On nights of 8th and 9th November again, the women volunteers burnt some articles meant to be handed over to the military. All contractors' property was burnt. On the 9th November the building of Barpeta High School was set on fire. On the 9th, 12th and 13th November two Government Revenue buildings were set fire to. The sub-Deputy Collector's Office and Price Control Office were also set to fire at Gauhati, on the nights of 13th and 14th November. There were other happenings also but they were minor ones and did not involve a heavy financial loss to the Government. For many days the public of Kamrup District continued their sabotage activities.

#### 4—GWALPARA DISTRICT

Arrests	...	7
Convictions	...	6
Collective Fines imposed	Rs.	38,000
Amount realised	Rs.	26,880-12-0

The movement, in the Gwalpara district, had a peaceful beginning. The students played a prominent part in organising peaceful demonstrations. But even the non-violent character of these demonstrations and processions, could not be tolerated by the authorities. On the 25th of August, a procession was taken out by 25 students and 15 other Congress workers. These processionists wanted only to express their sympathies with the arrested leaders and ventilate their grievances against the tyranny of the authorities. They had nothing except the tri-colour with them. Hardly did they move a little forward than the S.D.O. and S.P. ordered *lathi* and bayonet charge on them. 9 of them were wounded and 4 received fatal injuries. 3 persons were immediately sent to the hospital out of whom only two could recover after an illness of four months. It was quite evident that severe blows had been inflicted on the peaceful processionists. A case was filed against the three wounded persons under Sec. 144 for disobedience shown to the police authorities. Four other processionists were arrested a little later.

The people were thus provoked, and their passions became uncontrollable when they saw that even the innocent and peaceful were being assaulted by the authorities. Some spirited youngmen, determined to avenge this

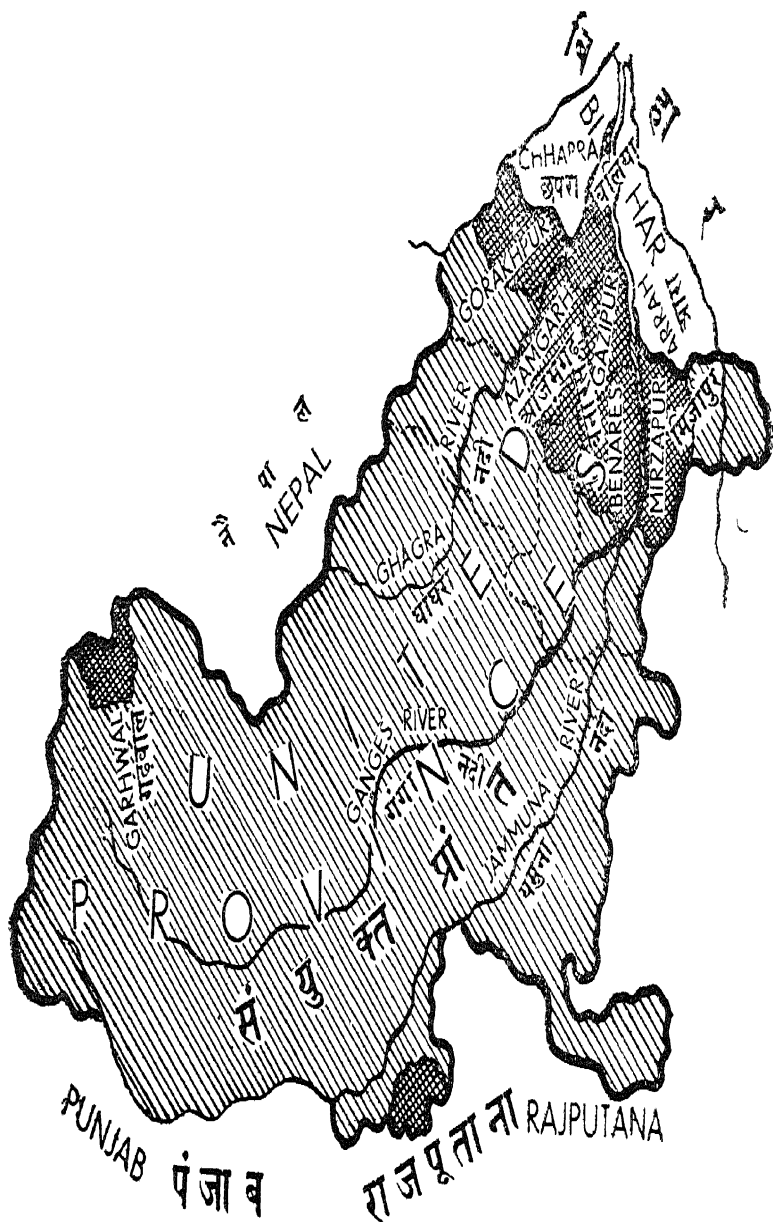
humiliation of their compatriots, started sabotage and other destructive activities. According to the Government report such activities continued upto November. On the night of 2nd and 3rd November, two bamboo bridges on the main road were burnt near a certain village. Attempts were also made to burn the Inspection Bungalow at a certain other place. On the night of the 15th November an attempt was made to burn the Hindu Hostel of a secondary school at Dhubri, and on 10th and 11th night a similar attempt was made to set fire to a bamboo bridge on a road about 20 miles out of Dhubri.

The tale of extreme high-handedness and characteristic brutality indulged during the course of realising collective fines, was nerve racking indeed. One incident narrated by Sjt. R.K. Chaudhry on the floor of the Assembly and admitted by the Premier as substantially correct is given here: "This incident took place in a village called Kokira. A constable was deputed for realising collective fine of Rs. 8 from one Nidhan Rajbansi of this village. The latter was unable to pay in cash and thereupon the constable seized his only pair of plough-bullocks. As he was taking them away the man protested, saying that it was his only pair of bullock cattle. On that the constable abused him and he returned it. The constable then beat him with a *lathi*. It is quite untrue to say that the latter was used as a *dao*. No *dao* injury was found on the constable's person. This took place during the day.

"At night at about 11 o'clock, the S. D. O. on his way back from Dudhnai, got the report of the occurrence and went to the spot with two lorry loads of armed sepoy and two European Officers. He found that the man was inside the closed doors of the house with a light burning inside it. He was asked to come out which he refused. On that the house was surrounded and the firing was ordered by the S. D. O. One European Officer opened fire. Six shots were fired and some bullets hit the man inside on the knee joints and he fell down bleeding profusely. One of the bullets pierced the walls opposite and struck a sepoy standing outside the wall, killing him instantaneously. At this the door was opened by force and several sepoy went in and pierced the man to death with bayonets. Both the dead bodies were brought. The man's body was post-mortemed. The sepoy's body was buried with honour whereas the man's postmortemed body was returned to his relatives. This was the report I had received."

How the British out-Heroded Herod<sup>1-2</sup> in their behaviour to crush the slave India can very well be illustrated by the examples given above. To crown this all, the S.D.O. was not dismissed as could be expected, but on the contrary was given a promotion and made Additional District Magistrate.





## CHAPTER VI

### UNITED PROVINCES

**Statement showing damage done and losses suffered  
by both sides during Congress Movement in U.P.**

#### *1—General*

Total number of Convictions	...	15,142
No. of Detentions	...	5,317
Collective Fines imposed	Rs.	34,89,380, 8/2
No. of places where collective fines imposed		579
Damage to Permanent Way	...	95

#### *2. Firing by Police or Military—*

No. of places	...	68	
" " Rounds	{	Revolvers	266
		Muskets	1587
		12 Bore	149
		Rifles	301
No. of Killed	...	133	
" " severely injured	...	227	
" " occasions on which Police fired		116	

#### *3. Damage to Police Stations—*

<i>Damage to Police Stations</i>			
No. of Police Stations completely burnt ...		6	
" " " " attacked ...		15	
Property lost ...	{	Revolvers	13
		Muskets	75
		And unknown quantities of ammunition.	
Policemen killed	...	18	
Policemen severely injured	...	12	

4. *Post-Offices and Telegraphs etc.*

No. of Post-Offices destroyed	...	9
" " " " attacked	...	87
Letter-Boxes destroyed	...	70
Postmen attacked	...	50
No. of Places where Telegraph and Telephone wires were cut	...	337

5. *Railways—*

No. of Stations attacked	...	72
" " " burnt	...	15
No. of derailments	...	14
Railway personnel killed	...	9
" " injured	...	14

6. *Use of Explosives—*

No. of Bomb explosions	...	60
" " Bombs or Explosives discovered before doing damage		157

7. *Cases of Sabotage—*

No. of cases of sabotage to electric supply companies or their apparatus or installations		7
No. of cases of sabotage to Roads	...	84
No of cases of sabotage to Canals or Tube-well irrigation systems	...	40
No. of cases of sabotage other than these		327

8—No. of Casualties—(Public)...	Fatal	207
	Non-fatal	458
	(Police) Fatal	16
	" " " Non-fatal	333

9— <i>Estimated Loss—</i>	to Government	Rs. 3,63,366
	7to other Parties	Rs. 1,02,73

*UNITED PROVINCES.*

Railway tracks damaged	...	15
Wire-cuttings	...	337 cases
Bomb explosions	...	60
Un-exploded Bombs	...	157
Property damaged	...	Rs. 7 to 8 lakhs
Firing at	...	118 occasions
Casualties	...	204
Police officers killed	...	16
Government buildings destroyed		250
Railway stations damaged	...	104
Trains derailed	...	14

## SOCIO-POLITICAL BACKGROUND

The United Provinces have to their credit many laurels and crosses in the struggle for Indian Independence. The people of the United Provinces are carriers of freedom traditions since 1857 when great battles were fought in these provinces. Many of the leaders of the great Mutiny belonged to these parts. Since then the United Provinces have either led or topped the list of persons arrested in different movements from 1920 to 1941. The United Province, in fact, are true Hindustan, for people from all the provinces have migrated to it for settlement. True Hindustani is spoken in the United Provinces and the people of these provinces cannot claim any other language of their own. It can very likely be called as the Moghal Sarai of India. People of all shades of opinion, dialects, castes and faiths have settled here and are carrying on their respective avocations in a manner they deem proper, without any provincial bias or prejudices. This is why one finds the entire business of the United Provinces controlled by the Punjabees and the Marwarees. This fact conclusively speaks of the national character of the people of the United Provinces, who have a greater aptitude for political rejuvenation rather than for material prosperity. This land of Nehrus and Malviyas is very rich in producing the requisite leadership for every progressive movement.

## CONGRESS LEADERSHIP

The United Provinces are essentially agricultural

and that is the reason why the peasant class has always formed the bulk of the rank and file of the Congress, and has been characteristic for its great revolutionary zeal. There is indeed one more reason for it. After 1857, when the whole of India passed to British hands and Imperial domination was fully established, a number of zamindar *taluqdars* were created by the British with the pious hope that they will help the British whenever the latter happened to face a grave menace created by an insurgent India. In the United Provinces there are as many as one lakh zamindars and landlords. This national economic order being kept intact by the shrewd British, the bulk of the population in these provinces used to live under the tyrannical rule of the landed aristocracy who through ideology, laws and British bayonets stranded the masses. The development of the Congress movement, with its professions for mass uplift and peasant amelioration, drew the mass of the persons in its orbit, and the exploited peasantry saw in these movements the panacea for all their ills. Consciously or unconsciously, this peasant stock formed into itself an integral part of the Congress organization; and, the Congress leadership in the United Provinces has, thus, been concentrating more and more upon the peasant problem, and from the very beginning has made the abolition of zamindari as its objective. The peasants stood by the Congress in thick and thin of all the movements launched by it since 1919. Thus the essential character of the Congress movement in the United Provinces has been mostly agrarian. In 1920, 1930, 1932 and 1942 the bulk of the workers emerged from the peasant class. It is for this reason that the Congress rank and file in the United Provinces is mostly composed of village workers who have borne the brunt of many a struggle.

### MASS-PSYCHOLOGY

Before the A-I.C.C. meeting in Bombay, Congress workers and leaders had gathered to listen to Pt. Nehru and knew about the impending Congress struggle. Panditji first listened to all the Congress workers and wanted to get their impressions about the people in their respective areas. Like those in other parts of India, the people in the United Provinces were restless, excited and full of anxiety. They also expected big things to happen and hence their eagerness to receive the decisions of the Bombay A-I.C.C. On the fateful morning of the 9th August, however, they got a surprise, a shock and a stag-

gering blow. The province found itself faced with a situation which was unprecedented in the history of India. In a way, the whole country was put in the throes of an undeclared war. In fact, it was an imposition on the nationalist India by the soul-less, irresponsible British and Indian bureaucracy. The people of the United Provinces, quite true to their nature and quick to act, responded to this Imperialistic *blitzkrieg* in a befitting manner. They had a glorious past to inspire them with and felt it as a great responsibility to acquit themselves splendidly.

### LEADERS' ROUND UP

By the evening of August 9 about 550 officials and prominent members of the Congress had been arrested under rule 26 and 129 of the Defence of India Rules and lodged in jails; and the arrests continued to be made in large numbers for some days. Other measures of repression, such as promulgation of 144 C.P.C., ban on meetings, curfew orders, parading of mounted police etc., immediately followed in almost every district headquarter, important towns and villages. The Government had its own reactions but the people of the United Provinces fought heroically. The people of the U.P. were left with no alternative but to stand up to the clarion call of their leaders.

### EASTERN AND WESTERN ZONE

For purposes of the analysis of the Movement, the United Provinces can be divided into two zones, Eastern and Western. The Movement had been much greater a success in the Eastern zone than the Western zone and the reasons for it were not far to seek. The population in the Eastern area was extremely dense and the administrative staff was not in proportion to its population; communications were bad and those that existed were liable to damage by floods in the rainy season; the whole area was to some extent cut off from the rest of the province and looked to Benares and the east rather than to Lucknow and the west. Military garrisons were smaller and less numerous. The proportion of Muslims was particularly small. In addition to these factors, these eastern districts had close connection with Bihar and Bengal and had for a number of years been the scene of a good deal of revolutionary activity on the part of the H.S.R.A., the Youth League,

the Forward Bloc and members of the Congress Socialist Party. Over and above these geographical and economic factors, the people were adventurous, brave and migrative by temperament. Hundreds and thousands of the people of these districts had migrated to different parts of India, particularly to the Bengal side and the upper classes had very good business in Calcutta. There were a number of uneducated and unemployed persons in these districts. All these factors had conspired together to create the requisite conditions to serve as a breeding ground for any mass upheaval. It was for this reason that the eastern part of the Province became the storm centre of the Movement. All these essential ingredients of mass uprising were lacking in the western districts. There was also absence of any ruthless exploitation of the peasantry by the landed aristocracy to the degree obtainable in the Eastern zone. Moreover, the western districts were generally populated by people who did not live under scarcity of any kind. They were generally well-to-do people and had not much of revolutionary zeal in them. Other objective conditions for a revolution had not also been sufficiently matured up.

### PROGRESS OF THE MOVEMENT

A close and careful analysis of the scope, intensity and speed of the movement in the eastern zone of the province revealed that the movement in the U. P. had been very much protracted so far as its mass aspect was concerned. Almost everywhere it started with *hartals*, protest-meetings, processions, defying of Section 144 C. P. C., and for almost a week the movement could not assume a majestic form. But credit must go to those who in their hundreds and thousands, rose against British Imperialism in Ballia, Azamgarh, Ghazipur, Basti, Mirzapur, Fyzabad, Sultanpur, Benares, Jaunpur, and Gorakhpur, with all the fret and fury at their command and made serious and sustained efforts to capture the symbols of the Governmental authority, in order to paralyse the British administration. Such a Movement, aiming at liquidating the British Empire in India, was mostly led by the students who left their schools and colleges and filtered through to the country-side. The majority of these students belonged to the Benares Hindu University. But this phase of the movement was soon gone and the valiant fighters formed themselves into guerilla regiments and most of them went under-ground, concentrating their energies on the

dislocation of communications. They incited the youth living in the hamlets of these regions to take to sabotage activities. Many geographical and social factors, for instance the road system of the eastern districts, proved advantageous for the implementation of such a programme. They exhorted the people to organise their defence, form *panchayats* and strain their every nerve to deal a death-blow to British imperialism, to win control over every vestige of authority and run a parallel government.

### SABOTAGE ACTIVITIES

The youth of U.P. embarked on a phase of sabotage and dislocation from Aug. 12, 1942 when news was received regarding cutting of wires and damage to other instruments at the important junction of Mughalsarai, a few miles away from Benares. From Benares and Allahabad the programme was carried out in the interior by the students. There were many activities in connection with such a programme on the 13th of August in Allahabad, Benares, Jaunpur, Azamgarh, Ballia and other districts. A train was derailed near Shahganj in Jaunpur district some 60 miles north of Benares, and a breach in the railway track extending to more than 30 ft. was the cause of derailment of another train at Sarai Mir in the Azamgarh district. It seemed that special type of tools were used for the implementation of the programme. On the same day Benares students got as far as Deoria, then in the Gorakhpur district where they managed to instigate the local students to make an attempt to raid the station. Then they proceeded towards Jhusi from Allahabad and attacked the railway station. They succeeded in winning the cooperation of the workers of Allahabad Fort, in damaging the Government property on other adjacent stations. They formed themselves into guerilla regiments and busied themselves with cutting wires, and removing rails between Allahabad and Benares stations. On the 14th August a batch of Benares students arrived in Ballia with Congress colours flying on the Railway engine. The movement swept over the whole district. Government institutions viz., *thana*, *kutchery*, etc., were invaded by the mobs. There was complete cessation of transport and communications between Benares, Ghazipur and Ballia for more than 3 days. By the 15th, these students took to free loot; immobilised trains and on that very day a mob, estimated at 5000, burnt down the railway station and looted wagons at Janghai in Jaunpur district. On

the same day a passenger train was derailed near Benares. Such a movement, in which thousands of villagers took part, was mainly organised from Benares and Allahabad, by the students. To the east of the Province in Bihar, railway communications had been completely destroyed and for want of any proper information, most sensational rumours were afloat. These incited the people to persist in such activities, which they honestly believed to be the main items of a real programme that ought to be followed.

### ATTACK ON GOVERNMENT INSTITUTIONS

In the 3rd week of August efforts were made in the eastern districts of the U. P., to attack Government institutions. Allahabad and Benares gave a lead in this direction. It was after the 12th of August that the Movement gained in momentum and rose in tempo, when the indignation of the people rose very high. They made repeated and sustained attacks on the *thanas* and *Kutcheries* and other means of communications and transport and tried their best to take them under their control. As has been said above there was an inadequate number of officials in eastern districts and as such they were afraid of facing a multitudinous crowd, much less to handle the new situation. After 15th and 16th of August the infuriated people of eastern districts, specially of Azamgarh and Jaunpur, made steady and determined attacks on the administration. But they could not hold out for long. The strength of their attacks was soon on the wane within two weeks. The mounted police and the military made repeated attacks on the insurgents and showed equal determination in crushing the rebellion. The authorities who had adopted most inhuman repressive measures; who had made indiscriminate *lathi* charges and firing on the people; who had hurled many indignities and insults on the people; who had dishonoured womanhood and wounded humanity by barbarously treating young children, were now resolved to establish a virtual reign of terror in the name of imperialism.

A large number of police-stations in the territory surrounded by the rivers Ghogra and the Ganges were attacked or threatened with destruction between August 15 and 17. It was on the 15th August that the two mobs began to manoeuvre assaults on the remote police station of Madhuban in the Azamgarh District. But soon the police, the so-called forces of Nadirshah, crushed the

people by their organised 'savagery' and adopted such sub-human and most callously ignoble methods to put down the rebellion which could very well tarnish the fair-name of any civilized nation, let alone of the British who boasted of a culture and civilisation which according to them, was perfectly Christian and as such perfectly humane!

### STORM CENTRES

As has already been said the Eastern region of the United Provinces comprising the Districts of Ballia, Ghazipur, Azamgarh, Jaunpur and Benares, had in it the storm centres of the movement. This region in fact formed a part of the ancient Bhojpur Raj, where the people spoke Bhojpuri. The people of these districts had a very brilliant historical past and had to their credit many battles fought in the vindication of their honour and integrity, and the independence of their motherland. Their forefathers had taken a prominent part in the great rebellion of 1857 and had gone down in the annals as brave fighters. During and after 1942, great efforts were made by the people of these districts, especially the Kshatriyas, to win for themselves their lost kingdoms. They were determined to do or die for the attainment of their objectives. Although like their ancestors, they failed in their attempts yet they did create a history like their ancestors, and invited the authorities to face them with the cruellest weapons of suppression.

### REPRESSION

The U.P. had given leadership to the rest of India in almost every sphere of life. The authorities of the United Provinces did not depart from the traditions. This time they gave lead to the bureaucracy in other provinces in quelling the Movement. The "Hallett regime" was the most notorious regime in India at that time. He was considered to be a past master in the art of putting down the people's movement. His measures were copied by the authorities in the other provinces also. He had found in M/s. Nethersole, Hardy, Marsh Smith and Muddie equally notorious partners in the sinister art of exercising the gangster methods with a view to crushing a freedom-loving people.

Soon after his assuming power as the Governor of these Provinces, Sir Maurice Hallett had made the pro-

phetic announcement that "those who are not with us are against us". Every body knew that whatever may have been Lord Linlithgow's attitude towards the Congress, this organisation was an eye-sore to Hallett, and he was prepared to throw the whole weight of his power to shipwreck it. 'Iron and blood,' was his pet slogan; and he let loose the police and the military on the people to perpetrate heinous crimes with impunity in order to overawe the people and to stabilise the tottering structure of British Imperialism in India. Detentions without trial, public humiliations, indiscriminate torture of the people without any compunction and other measures of barbarity had become the order of the day. Even the wearing of *khaddar* was a crime, and no part of the Province was an exception to it.

In the eastern districts, village after village was pilaged, looted and burnt. The inmates were dragged outside. They were beaten, their property was looted, and their women molested. Houses belonging to the Congress-men were burnt in their presence. Collective fines were realised at the point of the bayonet. Even the pro-Government people could not get off Scot free. The Zamindars, traders and middle class people fell victim to the sweeping orgies of loot and arson engineered by the Government. It was impossible to make a correct estimation of the damage done to the public by the Government. But it was quite clear that the Hallett regime had only one single end in view, and that was to crush opposition of any kind, and to force on the people the idea of British overlordship in India. The Government explored and tried all mean and ignoble subterfuges to attain their objective. It would now be useless to shed tears on what happened. We can only profit by the experience that we had during those great days of the Movement.

#### 1—BALLIA

Arrests	1000
Firings	at 17 places
Deaths	121
Wounded	300
Villages burnt	30
Houses destroyed	215
Collective Fines	Rs. 12,00,000

Ballia is the pride of the U.P. The people of Ballia have added a golden leaf to the history of India. The sufferings of these people are great and innumerable but the record they have created is far greater still. It was the people of Ballia who showed the path of the sacrifice and it was they again who showed how glory is achieved, how laurels are won, how liberty is attained and enjoyed. When everywhere prospects were gloomy and the curtain of desperation was hanging on the hearts of the people, when they were thinking that the Congress was only a tale and parable of the past, Ballia gave sun-shine and hope to the people. It proved that the war of liberty was worthy of shedding the last drop of one's blood. It proved to the hilt that the Congress was a living organism, ever dynamic, and more powerful than it was at any other time in the history of India. The Congress was now a real force; it was not only an army of liberation but also a government, independent and sovereign.

Ballia has a population of 10 lakhs. It is a small district, rich in soil and heritage. It has a proud past to inspire with and the people love learning, and this innate tendency has made them all the more politically conscious. The people followed the events before 1942 with anxiety, excitement and inquisitiveness. They began to depend upon the Congress Kaumi Sewa Dal and the Gram Rakshak Dal for their defence against any internal and external attack, and joined them in their thousands. The sudden arrest of Congress leaders in Bombay left the people of Ballia aghast and indignant and their first reaction was similar to that in other parts of the country. There were spontaneous *hartals* in schools and colleges. Markets were closed as a protest against the repressive policy of the Government and meetings and processions were organised on the 10th of August. Students left their studies. They marched in processions in the city and got the markets closed. The day passed off peacefully without any mishap. On the next day, i.e. on the 11th August, a huge procession of students, numbering about 15,000 marched towards the district courts to get the court work suspended. Some of these students were arrested; and this was enough to the students, who mustered strong and formed themselves into a huge procession, defied section 144 C.P.C. and marched towards the district courts to get the court work suspended. On receipt of information that a procession was heading towards the court, Mr. Wais, sub-divisional Officer, Ballia (A Mohammendan gentleman), who was mainly posted

at L.W.M. College, rushed with an armed force and checked the procession near the gates of the railway crossing, which was not less than half a mile from the school, and which lay between the city and the court compound. The procession stopped and the crowd began swelling. The students were orderly and non-violent but they had no control over the mob and their passions. All of a sudden brickbats and stone pieces lying near the railway lines were thrown and exchanged between the crowd and the police. On this Mr. Wais ordered *lathi* charge on the students and as a result 100 students were injured and one of them succumbed to his injuries in the hospital. The crowd melted back towards the city and Mr. Wais with the police continued and followed it up to *chowk*. About 50 students were arrested. It was alleged that Mr. Wais went a step further in arresting and dragging out students who had nothing to do with the procession and were sitting quietly in their homes. They were beaten in public thoroughfares. This excited the mob, but nothing untoward happened despite the police excesses. This process continued till the 13th and 14th. The police excesses only diverted the attention of the people to destructive and subversive activities. Girls with Congress flags made attempts to reach the Ballia court to request the District Magistrate Mr. J. Nigam, I.C.S. and Mr. Wais to close their courts. When the girls were thus trying to get the courts closed, a batch of boy students went to the Ballia station, that lay close to the town, and set fire to it. On return from there this batch of students went to the courts and created some trouble.

The arrest of a few girls and at-random-firing by the police in the market sent a wave of indignation into the hearts of the people; and its news spread like wild fire in the interior of the district outside the city. This caused enough excitement and as a result removal of rails, cutting of telegraph wires and burning of railway and police stations began in the rural areas. The people got this programme from two sources; from Mr. Amery's speech and also from those who returned from Bombay. From the 14th to 16th of August, 13 railway stations were burnt together with their furniture and records. The number of persons who participated in these operations ranged from five to fifteen thousand.

On the 13th August, the Saitwar Police Station was raided by the people. The building and all records were destroyed and the arms seized. The station officer and

the policemen surrendered to the people, when they occupied the police stations of Narwar, Sikandarpur, Unao, Garhwar, and Haldarpur. On the 10th August they took possession of the Bansdih Tehsil and the police station. All the records were burnt and new officers were appointed, the old ones having been dismissed after payment of three month's salary.

On the 16th August the people raided the Rasra Tehsil, Treasury and the Police Station. The authorities surrendered immediately and the National Flag was soon hoisted over the buildings. The mob turned towards its next objective and entered the big compound of a loyalist to take possession of a seed store. The Naib Tahsildar however, proved treacherous and got the doors of this compound closed. The surrounded mob was mercilessly fired at, reminding the scenes at Jallianwallah Bagh. As a result of this firing 3 persons died on the spot and hundreds were injured.

### A GREAT PERFDY

The sub-Inspector of Ballia Police station proved a Quisling. On the 17th August the people went to the police station to hoist the National Flag over the building. He vowed loyalty to the Congress and expressed himself in full sympathy with its cause and the movement. In order to give satisfactory proof of his changed allegiance he put on Gandhi cap. On being asked by the people to surrender his arms he promised to do it the next day, the 18th August. When a huge crowd, some 25 to 30 thousand strong, reached police station, so to say, to Baptise the *Thanedar* he called in the leaders, and requested the people to stay outside and exercise restraint. As soon as the leaders entered the premises of the *Thana*, the doors were banged behind them. Police constables had already gone up on the roof of the building with their guns. The leaders were asked to go up. As they were going up the deceitful *Thanedar* bolted the door on the stair-case from inside. It was a signal for the police to open fire on the leaders thus entrapped, and on the peaceful and unarmed masses standing below. But the people remained firm as a rock and were not prepared to leave their leaders in the lurch. Steadily did they come forward to receive the bullet wounds. There was no dearth of brave souls.

A young lad, Kaushalya Kumar, looked up and found that the Tricolour was no longer fluttering high in the

sky. He could not tolerate it. Rushing forth from the crowd he marched towards the building and tried to go up. But soon he was fired at from above and collapsed. Bullets continue raining right from 3.30 to 8 P.M. in the night. But the aures of the day went to the unarmed, non-violent, defenceless but brave and firm people. The entire stock of ammunition of the police was exhausted and the police Inspector and other members of the staff were forced to surrender. 19 persons died at the spot and 41 received deep wounds. Still, not a single policeman was attacked, though the *thana* was set ablaze.

### PEOPLE MARCH ON

Thus, 8 police stations were completely burnt down and the tri-colour was hoisted over the remaining two also, viz., Ballia Kotwali and Rasra. Some of these stations were so much damaged that they had to be built anew. 17 guns were seized by the people during these raids. Practically all the police officers had left their respective *thanas* for the headquarters. The fleeing police officers of Sikandarpur Police Station were caught hold of by the police at Sukhpura and five guns were snatched from them while 8 guns were taken from the constables returning from the Phabna Station. On the 19th, when the entire district was thus occupied by the insurgents the people gathered together before the District Jail and formed into a procession and marched towards the District headquarters to hold it under their control. The crowd was estimated to be about 10,000 strong and was composed of both Hindus and Muslims. On receipt of the information even the most influential loyalists were staggered. They approached the District Magistrate to release the Congress workers and thereby control the situation which was fast deteriorating.

### RELEASE OF CONGRESS LEADERS

The District Magistrate himself was very much worried, because the situation was steadily getting uncontrollable. But he acted with dignity and showed considerable foresight and patience. He held conversations with the leaders in jail and set them free.

On being released Mr. Chitu Pande, the President, and other leaders explained to the mob that violent deeds were against Congress principles and requested them to be peaceful. They forced the mob by persuasion to re-

ture and as a result the crowd began to melt away. The 150 released persons went round the city and tried to get the market opened. There was, however, a certain section of the people who characterised this policy of the Congress as timid and being dis-satisfied fell upon the house of an Honorary Magistrate and looted it. Then followed the looting of houses of Magistrates, Munsiffs, Treasury Officer and the Magistrates in-charge of military recruitment. They also set on fire two police outposts and a police lorry. After these loots, on the 20th August, the bazar people and the citizens met and appealed to the Congress leaders to exercise their influence in getting the markets opened, and protect the citizens from the hooligans. The leaders got the markets opened and began to check hooliganism by all possible means. Next day information was received that a strong batch of about two or three hundred persons was marching towards the city from the country-side. The leaders immediately went there and persuaded them to retire, which they did. When this crowd went back and the markets had been restored to normal working, a strong armed guard of police reached the *chowk* area in the city at about 3 P. M. and started firing. Why and with whose permission the firing took place is yet a mystery. But this caused the death of six innocent persons, including a retired *Peshkar* who was returning from the temple.

### FORMATION OF NATIONAL GOVERNMENT

Having occupied the whole District, the responsibility of the administration of the District devolved upon the Congress leaders which they discharged most efficiently. On the 19th a National Government was established in Ballia with Mr. Chitu Pandey as its head. This Government took oath of office and on the 20th a huge meeting, consisting of all sects and sections of the society, was held at Hanumanganj Kothi. In token of their support and recognition of the National Government the people donated thousands of rupees to help the National Government to carry on its administration. The loyal servants of His Majesty's Government were put in confinement in Police Lines and new appointments were made in their places.

The new popular Government had great moral influence on the people in the town. Some people had looted the property of seed stores, railway stations and the steamer. This Government instituted a committee

of inquiry and called upon the people to deposit this property. To everybody's surprise many people came forward and not only admitted their guilt but also deposited the looted goods with the Government. In Rewti circle a widow's ornaments worth Rs. 3,000/ had been stolen and the police had been unable to find out the culprits. She applied to the new Government and the new Government found out the thief and restored the ornaments of the lady. Though this new Government acted only for a few days, it must be admitted to its credit that it afforded protection both to the people as well as to Government servants. There was not a single instance on record to show that any government servant's property was either looted, or he himself was mishandled by the people during those days. It was also said when the new Government assumed office there were more than 1½ lakhs of rupees in the Treasury, but no one dreamt of using this money for any illegal purpose. After the 22nd August Ballia was faced with a wave of repression which put to shame even the much condemned Nazi and Fascist methods.

### REPRESSION

Much to the misfortune of Ballia, two notorious tyrants, Marsh Smith and Nethersole, reached the place on the 22nd of August with a contingent of military force and then followed an orgy of loot and arson. Many died as a result of random shootings by the Military and the police. About 150 houses of Congressmen were looted and burnt, and ladies and children were driven out of the villages. Hair (*Choti*) of some of the ladies were cut and others were deprived of their ornaments and clothes and forced to wear rags. Many families were locked inside their houses for 24 hours without any food or water. The people were tied to the trees in the centre of the villages and caned mercilessly. Many were forced to lick spittle from the ground and were contemptuously addressed with filthy abuse. It was reported that at some of the police stations even urine was poured in the mouths of people. Some of the persons were beaten for not saluting the *chowkidars*. Their articles were auctioned. Beating with *lathis*, *dundas* butts of rifles, fists and shoes was almost a common practice. Slapping and even piercing with bayonets was not uncommon.

Collective fine of about Rs. 12 lakhs was imposed but it was reported that actually more than 29 lakhs was reali-

sed. More than 46 persons died as a result of bullet wounds, and many more were injured. A few hundred houses were burnt and more than 100 were demolished. Even ladies could not escape the brutal assault. They were chastised and molested. The object of these measures of repression was to recapture the district and establish a reign of terror in the hearts of the people, so that they could not rise in rebellion again against the British rule.

I have hitherto deliberately avoided giving details of the sad tales of the victims of British butchery. Everywhere the innocent and peaceful citizens were either reduced to ashes or subjected to all sorts of humiliating processes, as a result of personal whim and prejudice of those in authority. But since Ballia occupies special place in the history of the Congress rebellion, I will cite a few very authentic cases which speak for themselves. The moment Mr. R. N. Marsh Smith landed, he looted the Singh Engineering Works and burnt the goods. The next which came in for his wrath was a *kothi* of Babu Sheo Prasad, a prominent *raia*. Mr. Marsh Smith ordered his contingent to loot that bright and beautiful *kothi*, and was also heard saying, "Oh, this is the *kothi* where the king of Congress used to stay. I will reduce it to earth." Now came the turn of the Hindu shopkeepers. Though they entreated with folded hands and assured him in many ways that they were not Congressmen, and had subscribed to the War Fund, and were still ready to do so, the so-called Governor of Ballia, started, imposing fines on them and enforcing their immediate realisation. It would be needless to dilate upon the callous process of realisation of this fine, but would suffice to say that it was realized in no time. Even loyalists could not escape the fury of Marsh Smith and his men. Many shopkeepers were arrested, harassed and beaten in the police-lines, and various physical tortures were inflicted on them. The case of B. Rajendra Prasad, a retired Police officer and also the Secretary of the District Zamindar's Association was a staggering one. He was ordered to climb up a tree. The bulk of his body could not help him to under go this ordeal and the constables pushed him on the tree stem somehow. Whenever his bulky body slipped down a little, the constables would pierce his buttocks and rectum with spears and rifle-muzzles from below, asking him not to come down. The poor old man could not climb up and fell down on the ground. Afterwards he was sentenced to 7 years imprisonment.

Mr. Marsh Smith himself looked to the scenes of whipping and ordered loot demonstrating how best to do it. He also instigated the police to do the same; and thus the claws were drenched in blood and the teeth had their taste. The citizens of the Ballia District and Ballia city were the main targets of this organised police looting. Big *Zamindars* and shop-keepers had to suffer this tyranny. What actually used to happen was this. On arrival of the military police in a particular village the panic stricken villagers with their women and children used to run away to the fields for fear of arrest and beating, and hide themselves there. Those who remained were ordered to vacate at once. Then the houses were looted one by one and after the necessary articles were taken possession of, that which was considered useless was stored in the courtyard and set fire to. So long as the police remained in the village nobody dared coming out for putting out the fire. It was only when the police left the village that the hidden folk came out, only to cast a last sorrowful look with tears in their sad and sunken eyes, at their belongings, which were once their comforts.

Even Hindu religious places could not escape this organised loot. In village Sukhpura, about 8 or 9 miles from Ballia, the Mahant, Shri Yadunath Giri, was made a victim. The Station Officer and the Magistrate reached this village and the Station Officer, though he had no authority, fired 6 bullets on the jubilant elephant belonging to *Math* that stood at its gate. The huge animal breathed its last. The beautiful bullocks tied close by were also shot dead and a fine horse was wounded with bullet in its hind legs. After these tragedies were staged the looting of the *Math* was ordered. Police scaled the high boundaries and walls of the *Math* with ladders and broke open the gates with axes and hammers. The boxes were broken open and belongings looted. The awe-stricken *Mahant* and his disciples could only succeed in escaping through the inner apartments. The fault of the *Mahant* was that during those hectic days he had also joined the forces of independence and hoisted the Congress flag.

There were many more significant cases full of woeful tales and tragedies in this District. At Sukhpura one villager Chandi Prasad, was going to give fodder to cattle. Mr. Marsh Smith called upon him and inquired as to who he was and where was he going. On being satisfied

with his answers he was allowed to go. But immediately someone said that that man was a Congressite. He was again called and interrogated. He repeated several times that he was a Congressman in 1921 but since then he had had nothing to do with the Congress. His entreaties went in vain. He was asked to turn about and when he so did he was shot in the back. A fun was thus enjoyed by the Director of the Civil Defence of the United Provinces, at the cost of a precious human life.

Passion, indignation and hatred had blinded these custodians of law and order to such an extent that even in some of the Hindu houses which bore the paintings of "Where there is righteousness there is Victory" (*Jahan Dharam hai wahan vijai hai*); "Love is God" (*Prem hi Parmeshwar hai*); "God is one, creatures many" (*Ishwar ek hai jiwa anek*); "Do not hate any person" (*Kisi prani se ghina mat karo*); "Swaraj is our birth right" (*Swarajya hamara Janmsiddh adhikar hai*); were pointed out by the Police authorities as designed for Congress propaganda. As a result of this Mr. Wais got all such scripts painted black. This throws enough light on official mentality.

Ballia was full of instances which excel each other in atrocity, barbarity, plunder, arson and loot. I have cited a few simple examples to give an idea of the types of measures employed by the officials to suppress this people's rising. I have concentrated more on, as I am more proud of, the people's action, and the living force of our people.

A few facts about Ballia are given below :—

#### PLACES WHERE FIRING WAS RESORTED TO

Place	Date	Dead	Injured
1. Ballia City	17th August	7	15
2. -do-	29th	15	9
3. Rasra	18th	20	75
4. Charowan	25th	4 (some animals)	
5. Seer	24th	7	15
6. Sikandrapur	26th	1	
7. Subkपुरa	25th	2	8
8. Bansdih	24th	7	
9. Chata	25th	2	
10. Baria	19th	35	150

<i>Place</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Death</i>	<i>Injured</i>
11. Chata	20th August		1
12. Narhi	25th „	2	1
13. Ballia Jail	1943 August	12	
14. Other Jails	„	7	
15. Chitwara	25th „	2	—
16. Phaphna	18th „	2	—
17. Manumanganj	25th „	2	—
		<hr/> 121	<hr/> 259

### LIST OF A FEW SUFFERERS OF BALLIA WITH THEIR APPROXIMATE LOSS

<i>Name of the residents</i>	<i>Approximate loss</i>
Syt. Sheo Prasad Ji	Rs. 1,00,000
Syt. Balgovind Ram	Rs. 80,000
Syt. Devi Ram Narain Ram	Rs. 50,000
Syt. Gopi Nath Singh	Rs. 20,000
Syt. Radha Krishna	Rs. 5000
Syt. Nand Kishore Sing	Rs. 4000
Dr. Probodh	Rs. 7000
Syt. Mangal Dalal	Rs. 5000
Syt. Parmanand Singh	Rs. 6600
Syt. Radhamohan Sing	Rs. 8000
Syt. Rama Nand Pandey	Rs. 5,000
Syt. Radha Govind Singh	Rs. 4,000

### LIST OF SOME HOUSES BURNT IN VARIOUS VILLAGES OF BALLIA DISTRICT

<i>Police station</i>	<i>Village</i>	<i>No. of Houses burnt</i>
Ballia	Hanumanganj	7
Garhwar	Sahpur	4
„	Garhwar	3
Baria	Baria	9
„	Raniganj Bazar	4
„	Sonbarasa	7
„	Madhubanj	2

<i>Police Station</i>	<i>Village</i>	<i>No. of Houses burnt</i>
Barhi	Sheopur	1
Baria	Phephana	not known
"	Chit Baragaon	10
"	Chandpur	2
"	Purari Patti	4
"	Rangrahi	4
"	Mirzapur	3
"	Gudrising ka Tola	Not known
"	Bahuata	35
"	Sukhpura	5
Bansdih	Deorhi	5
"	Reoti	Not known
Sahatwar	Sahatwar	3
"	Rajgaon	2
Mania	Mania	2
"	Srinagar	3
Bansdih	Chata	4
"	Bansidih	4
Sikandarpur	Sikandarpur	4/6
Rasra	Sardaspur	4
"	Athilapura	3

Within a month from the 19th August, about 1,000 persons were arrested. Out of these about 250 were released giving them 20 to 25 canes each. The rest were sentenced to imprisonment ranging from 5 to 7 years, caned, and fines from one to two thousand rupees, were imposed on them. Two Hundred twentyfive persons were detained under Secs. 26 and 129 Criminal Penal Code.

## 2—GHAZIPUR DISTRICT

Arrests	...	3000
Detentions	...	100
Damage	...	Rs. 32,00,000
Villages destroyed	...	74
Firing	...	at 20 places.
Deaths	...	167

Wounded

239

Collective fines

Rs. 3,29,179-4-3

Ghazipur was the next door neighbour of the brave Ballia. What happened in Ballia had a shadow left behind in Ghazipur. The story of repression in Ballia stirred up Ghazipur and put it to action. On the 10th of August the news of the arrest of Congress leaders provoked Ghazipur beyond measure. The people of the district, particularly the youth, were determined to do or die for the country. Youngmen of the district, in the absence of leaders assumed leadership and undertook to promote the country's cause in a perfectly non-violent manner.

In the beginning they did their best to remain perfectly non-violent, but as they received the news of police repression elsewhere, there was a *volteface* in their attitude. Fuel to the fire was added by Mr. L.S. Amery's broadcast, and a programme was thus made available to the people. The otherwise non-violent people took to sabotage.

Means of communication and transport became the people's first target. They started cutting wires, uprooting the poles and destroying all stamps and symbols representing British authority. Almost all the Railway Stations were burnt. The atmosphere had become all smoky. Trains were taken possession of. Many engines were destroyed and many bogeys derailed.

Railway trains, thus freed of the Bureaucracy's control, were utilised by the people for further attack on government property. They went to Rajwady and attacked the Benares aerodrome. It was said that at Nandganj Rly. Station there was a hot contest between the people and the soldiers, the latter having fired incessantly on the people. The young insurgents remained at their posts. It was estimated that some 70 to 80 youngmen died at the spot, and several hundreds were wounded. At Sadat and Jamania Rly. Station similar firing was made on the people, and two youngmen lost their lives.

### CONTROL OVER DISTRICT *THANAS*

Means of communications having been dislocated, the people turned to *thanas* to bring them under their control and hoist the national flag over them. Young heroes of the Revolution moved from *thana* to *thana* and

hoisted the flag. Almost every *thana* in the district had surrendered to them. At some places the *thanas* were ruined and on others the national flags were flying. At Ghazipur the brave fighters took out a huge procession on the 15th August. They marched to the *kotwali* with the intention of hoisting the flag but it did not materialize because a *lathi*-charge was made on the people who did not want to suffer for nothing, as virtually the whole district was already under their control and they thought it proper to mark time with the said *kotwali*.

At the Sadat *thana* the police did not fare well. Here also firing was resorted to, but soon it came to an end as the ammunition was exhausted. The *thanedar* and other officials accepted their defeat. But so high had the passions of the people run that they burnt the *thana* along with its *thanedar* and his men.

## TOWARDS THE KUTCHERIES

Now the young men made the *kutcheries* the object of their growing ire. The authorities were showing signs of nervousness. When Saidpur *kutchery* was attacked, the Tahsildar had no alternative but to surrender. Thus was the *kutchery* brought under the tricolour.

## MOHMMADABAD INCIDENT

The people of Mohammadabad had to fight a pitched battle with the military. The latter fired many rounds on the people, who had no weapon with them excepting their high sense of patriotism and patriotic slogans, with which they were rending the air. Six young men died raising slogans.

## HEROISM OF THE PEOPLE OF SHERPUR.

Village Sherpur is 20 miles from Ghazipur. The people of this village really proved that they were *sher* or lion. The village was nothing but the den of such lions. On the 14th of August the brave villagers faced bullet wounds at Mohammadabad Railway Station and at the aerodome. Their leader, Yamuna Giri, received deep wounds. He fell unconscious and was subsequently arrested. The people of the village on receiving the news flew in a rage and roared like lions. They were determined to get the aerodrome under their control. At midnight when the sky was over-

cast with clouds, a batch of five hundred brave heroes marched towards the aerodrome. But authorities, having realised that it was a bad time for them, had left the aerodrome. The aerodrome thus deserted by its defenders passed under the people's control. A certain doctor of village Sherpur needs special mention here. The Tehsildar threateningly demanded of him to remove the flag. But the doctor cared a whit for such threats. The Tehsildar then fired at the doctor himself. The first bullet passed through his thighs; the second entered his abdomen, and the third pierced his chest. He fell down. But his hands had not relaxed their grip of the flag-staff.

### THE THREE-DAY REPUBLIC

The administration in the district was thus paralysed and passed on to the people who kept it under their control only for three days, i.e. from 19th to 21st of August. The people breathed a sigh of relief at the end of tyranny of the British rule. In the District at every place, Congress workers set up *Panchayats* for the maintenance of peace and the defence of the people. Though the three days' republic had now become merely a story but so romantic was it that the people are not yet tired of narrating it. After 3 days soldiers entered into the district, under the leadership of Nethersole and Hardy.

### REPRESSION

As elsewhere the authorities did not show any compunction or compassion for the insurgents and their relations. A virtual reign of terror followed in the wake of the short-lived peoples' Raj. In the absence of trains for their use the tommies crossed the Gomati near Benares. They looted, plundered, and pillaged all villages which came in their way. Village Rampur suffered most. The sufferings of the people of Sherpur were unspeakable. They had learnt that Baluch soldiers were coming towards them. The people planned to meet them with their *lathis* but Congress workers requested them to meet the aggressor with perfect calm and in a non-violent manner. The soldiers indulged in all sorts of inhuman atrocities. The people were fired at killing Rama Shankar Lal and Shobha Ram at the spot. For 12 hours the village was looted. The damage thus caused to the people was estimated to amount to rupees three lakhs.

Jewellery was robbed of and ornaments were snat-

ched from the persons of the women which mutilated their limbs. They were subjected to innumerable other indignities. Shrimati Radhika Devi was thrown in a well where she died.

At villages Gamahar, Kasamabad, Sadat, Nandganj etc. similar treatment was meted out to the simple armless and non-violent people. Village Gamahar was surrounded by the Baluchi soldiers, who fired at the people. Dudh Nath Singh and Daroga Singh attained martyrdom. Many were wounded. The village was looted and the women were divested of their jewellery and their honour sullied. The village sustained a loss of rupees one lakh.

On the 24th of August, four European soldiers with 150 other soldiers, including the *thanedar* of Nandganj Police Circle, raided a village in the circle. The European soldiers left behind their Indian friends at a distance from the village and entered into it. Women were assaulted by them. Their ornaments were laid hands upon. All the houses were looted, and set on fire. All the villagers were made naked and forced to topple like frogs, and were beaten. The height of oppression could very well be imagined from the fact that this was the village which had singularly stayed out of the sabotage activities. Shri Vikramaditya Singh of 'Aj' was making a tour of the affected areas, on cycle. At Saidpur where the people were being subjected to innumerable tortures, where women were being dishonoured in the presence of their men-folk, he with his *chaprasi* was caught and brought in the presence of Nethersole, who after having examined the former's introduction letter mockingly said, "Oh I see, you work in the "AJ", that bloody paper edited by bloody Kamalapati. You cannot be let off. He and his *chaprasi* were mercilessly beaten for hours together and were lodged in a *thana* with 30 other people, whose only crime was that their relations had taken part in the movement.

## TREATMENT OF POLITICALS

All the politicals used to be made stark naked and asked to lie down in the scorching heat of the noon. They were kicked, fisted, whipped and flogged. Nobody, whatever his age and condition of health was spared of this barbarity, not even those noted for being pro-British. One day a certain gentleman felt giddy. He was very

thirsty. He begged for a cup of water from a constable but what he was actually given was a cup of urine.

The politicals were thus tortured, and to add insult to injury, they were told how their women in the villages, were being dragged in open fields, and dishonoured in the presence of thousands of people, and how their houses were being looted and burnt.

### COLLECTIVE FINES

Hitlerite methods were used in the realization of fines. The people who suffered most, whose property was looted and houses burnt were forced to part with the biggest amount of their money in the shape of collective fines. Thus impoverished they could not always pay the fine. Their remaining property was attached, their cattle auctioned, foodstuffs carried off, and they themselves beaten before being let off.

### 3—AZAMGARH DISTRICT

Detentions	...	380
Convictions	...	231
Collective fines	... Rs. 1,03,645-2-6	
Damages caused by plunder	Rs. 3,52,000	
Houses burnt	...	205

The news of the arrest of the Congress leaders much provoked the people. They organized strikes and took out processions, and thus gave expression to their growing resentment against the British. All and sundry took part in these peaceful demonstrations and the student community gave them the lead. Some Congress workers tried their best to keep the passions of the people within bounds. It was because of their efforts that the Movement in the beginning was perfectly non-violent, but the processionists and the demonstrators soon began resorting to the programme of sabotage and dislocation and were thus heading towards their immediate objective of paralysing the whole administration, and getting under control almost all the government institutions. But the people were least inclined to attack the government officials. The repression resorted to by the authorities in a callous and unwanton manner unleashed the violent forces of the people.

The movement in the district was truly a mass

movement because excepting the few government officials almost everybody participated in it. Those who did not actively participate were not slow in extending their sympathies and giving their blessings to the movement. It was estimated that the active participants numbered over two lakhs.

On the 18th of August the people of Azamgarh took out a huge procession but they were not in the know of what was happening at other places and what was the nature of the speech broadcast by Mr. Amery, giving out the alleged Congress programme. Their aim, therefore, in the beginning was only to stage a peaceful demonstration and protest. But the authorities met them with force and were inclined to disperse them with violent methods. The magistrate imposed a ban on the people's entry in the *kutchery*. They felt very much humiliated. The situation began to take an unpleasant turn for the authorities, as people began to remonstrate grudge and grumble, but soon better sense prevailed upon the Magistrate. He withdrew the ban. The processionists in a mood of acclamation and triumph, majestically moved towards the Karbala Maidan and transformed themselves into a big assembly.

On the 15th August, one thousand villagers belonging to Fatehpur and other villages attacked Rampur *chauki* and put to fire all the paraphernalia of the *thana*. The panicky officials had already fled to Madhuban. But this did not satisfy the people. They fell upon the post office and set it ablaze. But they gave sufficient proof of their sense of prudence. 35 money-orders being in the post office at the time were handed over to the post master, who was asked to make immediate delivery of the same.

Stage by stage the people gained in courage and fortitude. They proceeded to other villages and reached a well in village Basti where already 10,000 peasants had collected together and were just returning from Belthera station with 650 bags of sugar as their booty. They prepared *sarbats* and enjoyed it to the full and went on. The villagers formed themselves into batches and joined the procession. In this way the procession swelled. By the time it reached Madhuban it was 65,000 strong. The procession stopped before the *thana*. Rambriksh Chaube, Mangal Deo Shastri and Sundar Deo Pande entered the *thana* and addressing the authority said, "British rule is over. People's Raj has been established. Now surrender to the

people. We will hoist national flag on the *thana*". The authorities were not prepared to accept it. They gave a curt reply. Chaubeji and others went back to the people and the procession with courage and determination proceeded towards the *thana*.

The authorities were already well-informed about it. They were fully prepared to face the mob attack. When they saw a wave of men and women sweeping towards them they ordered firing which was ceaseless and indiscriminate, but the brave fighters for freedom were not prepared to be cowed down and bend their knees. They marched on. At a certain *Morcha* a policeman was caught and his gun snatched. The people did not want to wreak vengeance in a violent manner. What they wanted was a peaceful and determined resistance offered to the hordes of the Hun, otherwise they could easily put to death many policemen and officials. They could have been levelled to the ground if only the people wanted.

The moment when the people were stepping forward to get control of the *thana* and hoist the National flag, they received intelligence that military troops armed with machine guns were coming to suppress them. They thought it better to turn back and not spill their blood by staying there. Mr. Newton, the District Magistrate in-charge of the *thana* made a feeling reference to the bravery shown by the people in the face of death and destruction in the course of a talk which he held with some people later on. The people of Azamgarh had shown the extent to which they were prepared to sacrifice their all in the battle of freedom.

According to the available figures 34 persons died at the spot and thousands were wounded during the firing. 42 persons died within a week in this way. There were in all 76 casualties. So fierce was the attack made by the police that not less than two to three hundred persons must have attained martyrdom. They were so much panicky and terror-stricken that they did not give out the names and addresses of the martyrs who were their relations. This makes for the discrepancy in the report thus obtained.

The incident of Taruwa *thana* had its own importance. On the 14th of August a mob consisting of 78,000 persons proceeded towards the *thana* for hoisting the tri-colour. The authorities had received information about the people's move and attack on the Khadat *thana*.

They trembled in their shoes, and feared lest they should meet the same fate as that of the *thanedar* and constables of the Khadat *thana*, who had been burnt. The procession stopped in front of Taruwa *thana*. Sjt. Tej Bahadur Singh, the leader, with some of his friends went to the *thanedar* and advised him to surrender to the people. Hardly did he arrive at a decision when the people caught hold of the policemen and snatched their guns. He had, therefore, no alternative but to surrender. The people assumed the control of the *thana* but agreed to hand over to him the personal pistol of a *thanedar* at his expressed request, because destruction of personal property was not the aim of the insurgents. All records belonging to the *thana* were burnt. In this way the *thana* came under the full possession of the insurgents and the national flag went high up in the sky.

The public was not yet satisfied. A court was set up to try its prisoners. One illiterate aged peasant, named Sri Jaddubhar Nayak, was made the Chief Justice. As the *thanedar* Shahjahan Baksh was brought into his presence, the Chief Justice assuring him of every protection said, "Brother *thanedar* no harm will come to you. Don't be afraid." He was externed. Even to-day people recall with pride and admiration the integrity and sense of justice that characterised the Chief Justice Sri Jaddubar Nayak.

### THE MOVEMENT IN MAU

Mau is the trade-centre of the District. From August 10 to 13 there was complete *hartal* in the city. On the 14th August, students formed a procession and marched towards the station. The police made a *lathi-charge*, which provoked the people immensely. The same day in the evening, a very strong mob attacked the notified area office. Next day it marched towards the *thana* with the intention of hoisting the national flag. The police prevented it from going further. The police alleged that the people had thrown upon them brick-bats which was denied by the latter. Whatever be the fact it was true that the police opened fire, which resulted in the instantaneous death of Shri Dukha Ram, and Shri Kalika Prasad died in the hospital. Many persons were severely wounded.

Very near Mau is Dwandwara railway station. On the 14th August a huge public meeting was held near the station in the noon. At the same time a special train full of

Tommies arrived. They unboarded the train and fired at the unarmed and peaceful people who were not prepared for such an eventuality and ran helter-skelter for protection. But the Tommies' thirst of the people's blood was not yet quenched. They ran after the fleeing people for  $1\frac{1}{3}$  miles. One man died at the spot and 17 or 18 persons were severely injured. Those who got simple hurts were many. When this atrocious behaviour was being indulged in by the tommies a certain woman was going to the fields. A tommie fired at her, killing her child who was only 18 months' old in her lap.

### MAHARAJPUR AND KAJHA INCIDENTS

The Maharajpur *thana* was attacked by a mob 2000 to 3000 strong. The *thanedar* was present there but the officials under him had surrendered to the mob and given the keys of the *thana* to the leaders. The *thanedar* himself surrendered later on.

Some Englishmen had been given property snatched from patriotic landlords, as a reward for their work in 1857. The property had been inherited by the Stermer Sisters who themselves lived in England and had engaged a manager to look after their estate. The estate fell within the jurisdiction of the Kajha *thana*. The manager of the Estate and other workers had been torturing the people in various ways, like the Nilha Englishmen of Bihar. The Stermer Sisters through their manager treated the *kisans* harshly. The *kisans* could do nothing without the manager's permission. They could not even fell a tree growing in their fields, cut grass and collect firewood. The molestation of women and attempts to assault them had become a common practice with the manager. The *Kisans* had been tolerating this nuisance for decades. Now their exasperation was at its zenith. The oppressed people were resolved to retaliate. They, therefore, numbering 7 to 8 thousand, attacked the Stermer Estate Bungalow on the evening of the 16th August and took away everything it contained.

### A HEROINE

Our narrative will remain incomplete without mentioning the heroism shown by the sister-in-law of Shri Algu Rai Shastri at Amila. The bravery manifested by this woman, and the courage shown by her, brought glory to the entire womanhood. Some soldiers broke

into the house, collected the entire paraphernalia, heaped it in the court-yard and were about to set fire to it when the lady rushed forward, jumped on the heap and roaring like a lioness said: "Burn me first and then the appendages." The white soldiers were startled and were completely unnerved on hearing such brave words. They could not even touch what they had collected. Even then some of them tried to decamp with some of the articles. She could not tolerate the open loot. She leapt forward and recovered all the articles. Thus overpowered, the soldiers went off with their heads hung down with shame.

### REPRISAL

The people had learnt sufficient lesson. They also were determined to destroy, dislocate and burn whatever stood for authority. The post-offices at Ghoshi, Rampur, Dohari Ghat, Maharaj Ganj and other three places were attacked and all the papers were burnt. Bridges were destroyed at 7 to 8 places on high-roads. Railway stations at Khurhat, Amila and Phulpur and other places were raided and tickets and other papers were burnt. Near Azamgarh a train full of military and merchandise was derailed. Near Rani-ki-Sarai a passenger train was so badly stoned that it was rendered useless. Rails, between Dohari Ghat and Mau and Shahganj were removed.

### THE REPRESSION

The story of repression in the district is nerve-racking. Looting of villages, pillaging and burning them, beating and flogging the people, putting women in the *thana* and outraging their modesty, and other atrocious acts had become the order of the day with the soldiers and the police authorities. I have received reports to this effect from different places, but owing to shortage of space am constrained not to give them here. I feel satisfied by giving here the more prominent of them, and feel sure that the reading public would very well gauge the height of repression in the district.

The people had gone to Rani-Ki-Sarai in connection with a fair. They were sitting idle at a place. But the military opened fire on them. The house of Mahadeo Singh, a Congress worker of Dawara village was burnt and the house-walls dug and brought down. He was so

mercilessly beaten that he fell unconscious. In this very state he was hung down from a tree and urine was poured into his mouth.

An estimate of the loot and plunder could easily be made from the straw instances that I proceed to give. Jewellery worth Rs. 32,000 was taken away from the house of Shiv Bahadur Singh, belonging to the family of the Maharaja of Benares, and property worth Rs. 20,000 belonging to him, was burnt. Kerosene oil was poured all over his palatial building which was set ablaze. His two sons aged 8 and 10 years saved their lives by jumping down from the house. A loss of about one lakh of rupees was caused to Shri Radha Raman Aggrawal of Mau.

Harrowing tales of molestation of women were related to me, which testify to the civilisation and culture that the British stand for. At village Ramnagar about 20 soldiers broke into the house of a Harijan, named Chaitu, his young wife was caught hold of and was raped turn by turn. The poor woman died. In a similar way some tommies entered a house in Kajha. The house mistress was preparing food with her two small daughters. She was caught hold of and molested.

Even national institutions could not escape the Government repression. The Swaraj Ashram of village Nawada was reduced to ashes, and similar treatment was meted out to Harijan Gurkul and to the Khaddar Bhandar, with all its contents, at Dohari Ghat. At Rani-Ki Sarai the military opened fire killing one man.

The politicals in the jails were rudely treated. Very inadequate rations were given to them. The arrangement of their boarding was thoroughly unsatisfactory and during illness no medical facilities were provided to them. They were daily flogged like other criminals.

Violence breeds violence. It is nature's law. The people, provoked by inhuman repression, ventured upon destruction and obliteration of every vestige of Government authority. Village Patwadha gave the lead to other villages in this respect. On the 23rd of August a huge meeting was held in the village. The assembly was busy in thrashing out ways and means of defence of the village. A lorry full of soldiers arrived. The people, thinking that the soldiers had come to attack them surrounded the lorry. The soldiers were completely unnerved. Thus unable to attack the people, they said, 'we

have not come to harm you in any manner. We are going back." "We request you to do so" the people replied "You go first then we disperse," said the soldiers; but as the people were going back to their respective places they were fired at from behind by the treacherous soldiers. Seven persons died at the spot and many were wounded. In a similar manner 5000 persons staged a protest demonstration at Atraulia. Firing was resorted to, killing many men, and wounding others. For many months this type of movement continued. At the dead of night, in the month of November the people bombarded the Khurhar, Railway Station and damaged its property. It was clear that the Government could not suppress the movement despite heartless repression, though its external form and tempo evaporated.

#### 4-BENARES DISTRICT

Detentions	...	310
Convictions	...	563
Externments	...	117
Executions	...	40-50
Firing	at 23 places, 2002 rounds	
Deaths	...	18
Wounded	...	85
Collective fines	...	Rs. 2,24,22,65

Benares is a very ancient city of India. It is one of the holiest places in the land, where Hindus go for pilgrimage. This ancient city has stood many political storms in its history. It has seen India winning and loosing her freedom, many a times and at many occasions it has been involved in the freedom's battles. It formed a part of the famous Bhojpur Raj and the residents of the district have the blood of the warriors of this ancient dynasty running in their veins. Dr. Gearson has written somewhere. "The credit of spreading Indian Culture goes to the Bengalees and Bhojpuris. The former did it with their pen while the latter with their *Danda*." In fact Dr. Gearson had discerned the mental and psychological make up as well as the latent energies of the people of this district. At all times whenever freedom's battles were fought in India these people always gave proof of their bravery and courage. When in 1942 the country, bled white by exploitation, and tired of the British, raised the solgan of 'quit India' and blew the war-bugle, the

people of Benares staked everything in the freedom's battle and successfully conducted it.

The Movement in this District began with a strike. On the 9th of August, a procession organised by the students of the Benares Hindu University marched through the streets of the City and terminated at Das-hawamedha Ghat and after a little pause was joined by the Congress workers and reached the Town Hall where it was transformed into a meeting. Dr. Gairola, a professor of the University, presided over the meeting. A programme was chalked out to conduct the movement. The next day the sabotage programme was received by the people through a broadcast speech by Mr. L.S. Amery. The people were so much incited that they were now determined to hoist the Congress Flag on every prominent institution. Processions were formed in every mohalla of the city. The University Students also took out huge processions. All the processions wended their way towards the Criminal Court to hoist the flag there. The police authorities were already present in the premises of the court. They stopped the processions in front of the court. A high official shouted at the top of his voice, "All of you go back to your homes". Do not try to come forward. It will be disastrous. The public retorted. "No we cannot go back. Our non-violence does not teach us to turn back. You cannot stop a real non-violent fighter in his onward-march, by bullets and *lathi*-charges". This curt reply was enough to infuriate the magistrate. He ordered *lathi*-charge. Mr. Teesdale was the first man to strike at the people and was followed by others. For a long time the people remained unmoved and dispersed only when the *lathi*-blows became unbearable. When the news of the *lathi*-charge reached the city there was a great tension throughout.

The repression failed to curb the rising tide and spirit of the people. They got fresh inspiration. Next day small batches of people moved in the streets shouting the new slogans, "Police men are our brothers, we are free". A huge procession, formed primarily by the students of the University, marched towards public buildings to hoist the flag. Every student was pulsating with new life. Nobody was anxious to save his or her face. They wanted to show what the youth of India could do for winning their country's freedom.

This bravery shown by the students struck terror

into the hearts of the authorities. The procession reached the Criminal Court, Soldiers were already posted there but nobody dared to open fire upon the students. Some of the youngmen climbed up to the top of the building and hoisted the flag. The flag began to flutter in the sky and with it danced the hearts of the people with joy.

Acclaiming victory and in a triumphant mood the procession turned towards the Civil Court to hoist the flag. Since all the necessary preparations had already been made by the authorities to meet the exigencies, they were standing there with obvious calm. Some of the students tried to climb up but failed. This failure went deep into the hearts of the students. The authorities found time to smile awhile with a sense of pride and triumph. A lean and thin student could not brook it. He rushed forward with a tri-colour in his hand and tried to climb up. Some of the bricks which were projecting outside served him as a ladder. With great dexterity and courage he went up inch by inch giving fear and anxiety to his comrades below. It was humanly impossible to go to the top and they were expecting him to fall down, at any moment. But he did succeed in carrying out his self-imposed mission. He fixed the tri-colour on the top of the building to the joy of the multitudinous crowd standing below. The tri-colour began to flutter. The people rent the air with shouts of victory to the immense grief and shame of the police who hang their heads in shame.

The same day girl students took the *Khadi bhandar* under their possession, which had previously been occupied by the police. The police tried to resist the girls but failed. The Girls thus had the full control of the *Khadi bhandar*.

These initial victories made the people more brave and determined. On the 11th and 12th they took out processions but by now the authorities had been fully prepared. They ordered firing and *lathi-charge*. Many insurgents died and many more were wounded. But the rising tempo of the movement was still unchecked. On the 13th it was resolved that the procession must terminate at the town hall passing through the Dashaswamedha Ghat and the people got busy making preparations. The magistrate arrived in the meantime with a posse of armed police and ordered a *lathi-charge*. Many persons were wounded, including Shri Bindeswari Pathak and Shri Rama Kant Misra, the organisers of the procession,

The public was highly provoked and as true Satyagrahis they sat on the road. Now the police started stoning the public. The patience of the people had reached its pitch. They could no longer remain non-violent. Stones were hurled at the police. 'Tit for tat' became their guiding motto, but they had no guns with them. The police fired 26 rounds. Many were killed, and many more wounded.

### SABOTAGE ACTIVITIES

The repressive measures adopted by the police goaded the people to plunge headlong into sabotage activities. All the telephone and telegraph wire-poles were uprooted. Wires were cut, bringing the communication system to a stand-still for many days. Rails and culverts on the Benares-Allahabad-Gaya-Patna Railway lines were dismantled. All the stations on the E. I. R. were looted and burnt, and the booty was distributed amongst the villagers. The Grand Trunk Road was breached at many places, and regularly barricaded. Aerodromes at Rajwari, and Ibbatpur were damaged. At every place railway godowns, police-stations and post-offices were plundered and burnt. The National flag was hoisted on every police station and government building. At one or two places the police sub-inspectors themselves hoisted the national flag.

### THE ROLE OF THE STUDENTS

The firing on 13th August set the people to hard thinking. They became mad with feelings of revenge. Organising of protest meetings was merely a dissipation of energies, they thought. One thousand students, therefore, left for villages and began to incite the people. These students reached upto Deoria in District Gorakhpur and instigated the local students to burn the railway station. On the 14th a batch of students reached Ballia and gave momentum to the movement there. The students had already got control over a passenger train. They put the National flag on the engine and wheeled off to Ballia. The people of those places also lent their full cooperation to the students and thus pushed forward the movement. At Dhanpur 5000 peasants marched to the *thana* and humbly asked the permission of that *thandar* for hoisting the National flag. He flew in a rage and ordered the policemen who were already present

there to loot the *bazar*, The people did not feel nervous about it. They remained firm in front of the *thana*. The *thanedar* ordered firing. In this way the people were doubly tortured. Their property was looted and they were mercilessly fired at. Their anger was thus excited and passions ran high. They fell upon the police authorities. A *thanedar* and two constables were killed. Some youngmen brought out all the belongings of the *thanedar*, heaped them into a pyre, put the dead bodies over it and set fire to it. Thus the *thana* was turned into a cremation ground.

On the 28th August, under the leadership of a very eminent Congress Worker Shri Jagat Narain Duba the people brought out a procession from the Congress office at Saiyid Raja. Marching through the main streets of the city it reached the Ram Lila Maidan. Some Indian soldiers, without giving any previous warning, opened fire. Shri Jagat Narain and other 15 workers received deep wounds. But the public did not lose heart. They went on with added courage and determination. The procession proceeded towards the city under the leadership of Chaudrika Sharma Nayak, a young man who had then assumed leadership. Marching through the eastern flank of the city it reached a place about half a mile from Basaha Police Station. The *thanedar* ordered firing. The policemen who were hiding in the premises and on the roof of the building kept on firing for two hours. The people adopted a marvellous strategy. They would lie down when there was firing and proceed when the firing ceased. The sun-set drew nigh and the people were still marching on. The police was forced to stop firing, and ran towards the wounded people, in order to take possession of them. The people had forestalled this eventuality. They had already carried away the wounded, numbering about 40 to 50 persons. The police could not lay their hands upon a single person.

### REPRESSION.

The policemen went to the neighbouring villages in search of the absconding persons but failing in this, they burnt villages, perpetrated inhuman crimes, tortured the people, locked them in the *thanas* and forced them to bribe the policemen. Shopkeepers of Saiyid Raja and some other people left the *bazar* and went to other places. Even women were fired upon and locked in *thanas*. They

were dragged down by their forelocks, were stripped naked and beaten. In many villages many women were molested. The women thus treated still narrate the tales of their woes, sufferings and humiliations. I refrain from giving their names and other details about them because it is feared that only evil and harm will be the ultimate result.

Heavy collective fines were imposed on the villages and harsh and gruesome methods were employed in realising them. In a certain village military soldiers went to the house of a *kisan* to realise fines. He had not a single pie with him. Still he promised to pay it afraid as he was of the soldiers' tyranny. He prayed to be given some grace days for the payment, which was refused. But as an inhuman reaction to his request his child, 18 months old was snatched from him and put into the fire. Thus the poor parents were seeing with their own eyes their tiny child being consumed in wild flames. Human history could hardly give a more tragic tale of torturous and man-made suffering. This is one of the glaring examples of the idiocy shown by the British, and the depth to which the British rule in India had degenerated.

### MILITARY CONTROL OVER THE HINDU UNIVERSITY

Repression everywhere was the order of the day. Even the Hindu University could not escape. A strong army of soldiers attacked the University and forced the students to leave the hostels at the point of bayonet. But not contented with this step, the Ladies' hostel became their next target. The same threat was repeated there too. But the brave girls were made of stronger mettle. They refused to comply with the order. The helpless girls were dragged out of their rooms and were not given time even to take their clothes with them. Even Malviya ji and the Vice Chancellor, Sir Radhakrishnan, were not spared. Their lodgings were surrounded by the military. The lawns and gardens of the University were turned into a cantonment. This was the first instance in human history when a seat of learning of the eminence of the Hindu University was subjected to such humiliation, and attacked. Hallett's lieutenants, Messrs. Marsh Smith and Nethersole besmeared their hands with the innocent blood of the peaceful and unarmed people. These tyrants ordered the military to burn villages and to rob them of money, jewellery, food-grains

and other articles of daily use. Men and women were tortured, tormented and subjected to many inhuman indecencies and humiliations. Such were the ways of the bureaucracy in the districts, and numerous were the situations in which restraints became impossible. Still the people of Benares remained perfectly non-violent and the stray cases of unfortunate lapses were only occasioned by the heartless government repression, which as compared to the atrocities committed by the bureaucracy, paled into insignificance.

### 5—GORAKHPUR DISTRICT

Collective fines	...	Rs. 2,19,170
Firing	...	3 places

Two or three days after the arrest of the leaders on the lateful day on 9th August, 1942, almost all the prominent workers and leaders of Gorakhpur District were thrown behind the prison bars. The public, which was thus provoked, was resolved to avenge the nations humiliation.

### BANSGAON TEHSIL

Some of the leaders of this Tehsil were arrested on the 14th August. On the 16th the people expressed their indignation by taking out huge procession. All the books in the Madaria Primary School were thrown out. A bridge on a road coming from village Naye was damaged. Gola, a town, stirred up with agitation. Procession was taken out and the National flag was hoisted on the *thana* and the post-office. 'Release Congress Leaders' and other such slogans were raised. Again, a bridge was pulled down near village Gagahi. Wires were cut. A wire-pole was pulled down at Bayili. A letter-box was reduced to ashes at Usuwa. Some soldiers, at this time, caught Ramadhar Singh. The people thus provoked snatched the turban of the *chaukidar*. The soldiers ran away but very soon a military guard with the village *goondas* reached the spot. The Captain of Gorakhpur, Ram Sadi Lal Naib Tahsildar, Bansgaon, and Satya Prasad Singh *thane-dar* Sikhriganj, were present. These policemen and soldiers indulged in free loot. All the *baniyas* were looted. The lion's share went to Masuddin belonging to Deo Raj Par.

## REPRESSION AND PLUNDER

This force of loot and plunder was split into two batches. Batudia village was looted Lalsa Pande was beaten, his house pillaged and he was thrown behind the bars. It was said that his grand daughter-in-law who had delivered a child only three days back, was dragged out. Khopa-par was raided. The headman of the village, Pt. Ram Lakhan Pande, and his two sons were caned and beaten with the butt-ends of the gun till they became unconscious. A building of the Hindi Sahitya, was set ablaze. Shrimati Kailash Wati Devi, wife of Pt. Rambali Mishra was caught by her hair and dragged out. She was stripped of her clothes and her Sari was torn. The village was looted and destroyed. Students were beaten and their clothes snatched away. The village sustained a loss of about Rs. 40,000 and many more villages were looted. Shri Ram Lakhan Shukla, an eminent Congress worker was arrested and his house was burnt involving, a loss of Rs. 11,194. Gopalpur was looted and its houses were burnt. The house of Ram Alakh Singh of village Madaria was looted and burnt. Ram Alakh and Balram were fined Rs. 50/- and awarded 10 whips each. On the 18th August the Tehsildar, Kanogo, the Kurk Amin and some of the pro-Government traitors of Deoria, with *chaprasis* came to realise the collective fines in village Sisai. The village was fined Rs. 300/- which the villagers refused to pay. They were mishandled. Three persons were badly beaten. Some of the villagers could not tolerate it. They fell on the officials. After a short while some Baluchi soldiers surrounded the village. The villagers acted with tact. They evacuated the village. The soldiers were about to shoot at Shri Radhapad Mukhtar who opened out his chest and challengingly shouted, 'Shoo! at me.' The soldiers were thus put to shame. They could not fire. About 30 villagers were arrested and sentenced to two years each. They had also been relentlessly flogged. Many houses were burnt and property looted. The people were machine-gunned and many women were molested by the soldiers.

## DEOGHAT

On the 29th, Captain Bhore arrived with some soldiers. Pandit Gopanath Misra was caught and asked to pay rupees four thousand as fine. The soldiers broke into his house. Startled at the shriek of women the villagers

collected together. The heads of Ram Lakhan and Phajan Miyan were blown off.

### BHATPAR

On the 18th of August the people of Bhatpar were fired at. Lalchand and Sharban Nauniya died immediately. On the 9th the *bazar* was looted. Collective fines were imposed and the local Gandhi Ashram was burnt.

### MALVARI

A swing was prepared on August 20 and about one hundred persons were tied to it. They were beaten and thrown into a ditch. Houses were burnt and looted. Many persons were huddled together inside the jails. Collective fine was imposed. Many people were tortured, but they stuck to the cult of non-violence.

I give below the list of damage caused by loot and burning:

Khopa-par damage	Rs. 40,000
Collective fines on a village near Madaria	Rs. 1,000
At Usua, Dudhara, Amoda etc.,	Rs. 50,000
Loot and plunder, and articles damaged	25 mds. wheat, Rice, Ghee.
Houses burnt in Khopapar Tahsil	12
Roofs destroyed	103
Dilapidated houses	76
Convictions	80
Total loss	Rs. 2,34,979

### 6—ALLAHABAD DISTRICT

Arrests	...	581
Convictions	...	458
Collective Fines	...	Rs. 93,038
Firing	...	2 places

Allahabad is a city of historical importance. It has been an important political centre since the hoary past. The pillar of Asoka and the Fort still stand for the

supreme position that Allahabad once enjoyed. In the modern times also, from Allahabad many politicians of eminence and men of letters have figured prominently on the Indian scene. The great and innumerable sacrifices of Pt. Moti Lal Nerhu of hallowed memory, have added to the glory of Allahabad. The members of his family are still carrying on the tradition of service and sacrifice established by him. *Swaraj Bhawan* is a living emblem of his services to the country, in which at present the office of the "All India Congress Committee", is lodged. These things have filled the air of Allahabad with political fervour, and these things again have urged the people of Allahabad to give lead to the rest of India in political and other matters. It is not strange, therefore, that when the trumpet call came to Allahabad it was not found napping, rather, it was eagerly awaiting the call and was keeping itself in complete readiness.

As the news of the arrest of the leaders reached Allahabad on the 9th of August, it stirred up the entire city. The routine of the city received a rude shock and a heavy jerk. Students, both male and female, left their respective institutions; workers stopped working and the markets ceased transacting business. The same day Congress workers were rounded up and offices of the Congress Committees were searched and locked. The Student community got highly exasperated. In the evening they formed into a procession, half mile long, and marched in the streets of the city. On the 10th August huge meetings were held in Purshottam Das Tandon Park and Mohammad Ali Park. No untoward happening occurred.

### THE STUDENTS' SERVICES AND SACRIFICES

The Students were filled to the core with patriotism and noble visions about the future of their country. They had tremendous grit, fortitude and capacity to work and fight for the nation. On the 11th of August, a huge procession much greater than any of the previous ones, was taken out from the University. Girl students in their hundreds were the active participants, and actually it was they who gave the lead. The air was surcharged with national slogans. The procession reached the Jha hostel and was soon stopped from proceeding further by a batch of police men.

A police officer stepped forward and pointing to the girls sarcastically said, 'Alas shielded by women you have

chosen to exhibit your might'. With one voice the students retorted, "Let them pass and then let us test your grit." The students stepped forward, came to the fore, and the girls receded back. The Police Officer stood dumb-founded by such a curt reply and after a pause said to his men, "Bring your *lathis*." The soldiers who were already trembling in their shoes did not know what to do. The officer shouted thrice ordering them to make *lathi* charge but to no purpose. A student came forward and said in a derisive tone. "It is enough." The poor officer was thus snubbed and stood petrified like a statue, and the students hailing victory marched on.

The students were full of energy but in the absence of a concerted programme they could not make full use of it. For two or three days they waited for a programme from the Congress High Command but as they knew that the High Command could not chalk out any programme, and helpless as they were by the unexpected arrests, they chalked out a programme for themselves according to their ability and in conformity with their ideals. On the 11th a huge meeting was held in the Union Hall of the University and taking out of two processions marching separately, and then holding of a meeting in the Mohammad Ali Park, where the final decision regarding the programme was to be arrived at, was decided upon.

Accordingly, the processions were taken out on the 12th. The procession which passed through the Government House was led by three girls, daughters of Shrimati Vijaya Laxmi Pandit. Mr. Justice Mulla and a police officer. The processionists were advised to behave in a perfectly non-violent manner. Still the District Magistrate opened fire. The three girls faced the bullets with cheer and smile but were wounded and fell down. The procession stopped. A certain young lad belonging to a loyal family laying bare his breast shouted, "Why do you fire at the girls? Make me your target". The bullet passed through his chest, and he fell dead. The students dipped their handkerchiefs in his blood and took a sacred vow to dedicate their lives at the altar of the Nations' cause.

The other procession was led by Shri Yadu Bir Singh. The Union Hall resounded with, "*Jaya ho, Bharat Bhagya Vidhata*" (Oh, Architect of India's destiny! may victory be to thee). The hall was full to capacity by 10 o'clock. The girls in charge of the National flag looked like war deities. In their hundreds these brave daughters of mother

India sang, '*Iski Shan na jane paawe. chahe jan bhale hi jawe*' '*Kibole man, tumi, able*' etc. etc.

At about 10 o'clock the procession reached the *kutcheri*. Policemen were standing there with their guns aiming at the procession. As the procession moved a bit forward they started hurling brick-bats and tried to snatch the flag from the hands of the girls. All the girls closed together and held the flag tight. The policemen used their full force, dragging the girls to a considerable distance, but failed to take possession of the flag. *Lathi-charges* began. The processionists would lie down or stand up at a signal given through a handkerchief. The mounted police from behind was hurriedly making *lathi-charges* in succession. In the front, guns were ready to be put into action. Suddenly some one shouted, 'Now begin.' I was struck on the back and fell down. With gunshots someone cried. "Farewell. Inqilab, Zindabad." I turned my back. I was also profusely bleeding. As I looked on the ground I shrieked. The sacred soil of India had turned red with the blood of her sons and daughters. All the processionists had gone mad with anger. Handkerchiefs were again soaked with blood and the National flag was bathed in it. Blood streaks were put on the forehead. Firing was still ceaseless. But we were all marching forward. Our comrades were falling down, and the rest were marching on. As the mounted police reached us the girls leaped forward, held tight the bridles of their horses. The authorities had to acknowledge their defeat and allowed the procession to move according to the scheduled programme. It was a great triumph and the credit for all this goes to the martyr Padma Dhar." This is the account given by Y. B. Singh himself.

Moved by the courage thus shown by the students and provoked by the Government repression, the people began to join the students' procession. *Lathi-charges* were made. After a short time the procession dispersed. But another was taken out from the Jawahar Square. The people received *lathi-blows*, but still continued their onward march, and were joined by other processions. Then all converged on the *Kotwali*. They raised a defence wall by the *thelas* and wooden sleepers to defend themselves against the firing. A patrol of the Baluchi soldiers was coming. The people started stoning the oncomers. The soldiers hesitated a bit and then started firing. A police sergeant with the police force also arrived and ordered firing. The leader of the procession, Shri

Rajan received a bullet in his chest. He fell down. The people began to flee for protection. Ramesh Malviya could not tolerate it. He came forward and asked the people not to run. The sergeant pressed the trigger of his revolver. Ramesh got a fatal wound on his chest and died at the spot. Police was firing at the run-aways killing many and wounding many more.

After this the *lathi* chrage, firings and Curfew Orders became a regular feature. Hundreds of people died. The British soldiers were in full control of the city. Still the students remained non-violent, continued taking out processions. Duties were allotted. Some of them took part in wire-cutting. Others burnt motors and lorries. But the passengers and the drivers were saved. The military wanted to enter into the University but failed.

On the 13th August some youngmen attacked the aerodrome and damaged it considerably. The local post-offices were looted and burnt. The police force at Ram Bagh Police Station had to surrender. About a dozen military lorries were burnt. For three days not a trace of British rule was in existence in the city. A number of University students went to the country-side and other provinces with the message of freedom. At a number of places stations were burnt, and *thanas* were taken possession of. Many public buildings were damaged. In conjunction with the students of the Hindu University the Allahabad students damaged and dislocated telephone and telegraph wires and removed rails in Allahabad, Benares, Mirzapur, Jaunpur, Azamgarh and other places.

## REPRESSION

As elsewhere, the story of repression in Allahabad district is soul stiring. Many innocent persons were killed by the police and military soldiers. On 12th August while some students were gossiping in the P.C. Banerjee Hostel, a military lorry passed through the hostel, and one of the soldiers fired at the students; but the aim was missed and a grass cutter was killed instead. Murari Mohan Bhattacharya who was coming from Johnstonganj was shot at. He fell down and with courage in both the hands he struggled to proceed but was again fired at, and this time he fell dead. All those who were putting on Gandhi caps were tortured in a variety of ways. They were caught, their caps were snatched and thrown into

the drains. They were spat upon and urine was poured on them. One youngman, named Dashrath Lal Jayaswa knew all this. By way of defiance he put on a Gandhi Cap and went towards the Mutthiganj cross-road. His cap was pulled down and he was asked to urinate on it, and was threatened with death in case of defiance. But the student did not mind the consequences and kept the honour of the cap. He was attacked by a policeman. He fell unconscious. A soldier whipped out his revolver and fired at him. Blood gushed out of his wounds. He pressed his wound with one hand and the Gandhi cap on his head with the other. The brave lad whose very life was in the balance, was thus struggling to uphold the national honour. He picked up courage and tried to run away. Another bullet struck his neck, and yet another passing through his ear, struck a *Dhobi* who died instantaneously. But the brave youngman survived all these barbarous attacks. Some students in Kandia village in this district were suspended from trees and shot at.

### AN IDEAL DEPUTY COLLECTOR

Such atrocities were being perpetrated daily on the students, but the Deputy Collector of a certain place behaved differently. He was very much moved by the untold sufferings of the people, and at once submitted his resignation, thus making way for the benefit of those officers who were taking pride in inhumanly tormenting hundreds and thousands of their countrymen.

### 7—JAUNPUR

Victims of firing	...	15
Executions	...	Unknown
Collective fines	Rs.	15,51,188-3-10
Firing.	...	4 places

On the morning of 10th August news of the arrest of the Congress leaders reached every nook and corner of the district. The people felt very much infuriated and were resolved to "do or die" and to remove the calumny on the nation, i.e. the foreign domination. But the youth of the district had no concrete and concerted programme before them. They had, therefore, to exercise much restraint on their rising passions.

After some days a golden day dawned, and people felt that they should no longer think in terms of being sub-

ject to any foreign power. They should consider themselves and behave as free citizens. In every village the people began to assemble and the youth assumed the leadership. The youth of the district decided that a national government must be established in the district. Brisk and full preparations were made for this purpose. Many departments were opened and each youngman was entrusted with one department. A department was specially created for sabotage and dislocation activities while the other was entrusted with the supreme task of starting "No rent" campaign in the district. First assault was made on all the means of communication and transport so that the people could get sufficient time and peace to establish a government of their own.

On the 13th a certain person was arrested as a suspect and he, in order to save his own face, leaked the secret of the conspiracy that the youth were planning against the Government. The police raided all the secret places where arms and weapons were collected by the youngmen and got control of everything that was contained in these secret places. While the police was returning, they met on the road some people who were attempting to destroy a bridge. The police opened fire. Many persons were wounded, but they continued to work for the destruction of the bridge. Many bridges were damaged in this way. At many places a number of youngmen fell victim to firing while busy in such destructive activities. At Dhamamore a brave student was made the target of his attack by one English Inspector. The student was attempting the destruction of the bridge. The Inspector was later on attacked by the people, and succumbed to *lathi* blows.

At many places the people felled huge trees and thus barricaded the roads so that military movement could be stopped. Stations and post-offices were burnt at many places in the district, but not a single life was lost. Special care was taken not to physically harm any employee. All the money that these and other Government institutions contained was looted, rails and culverts were pulled down; wire poles were uprooted and in this way British administration machinery was paralysed by bringing communication and transport system to a standstill.

Tri-colour was flown at Sujanganj *thana*. The people attacked Sujanganj *thana*; the *thanedar* and *chokidar* were arrested and cartridges, rifles etc. were snatched, and

national flag hoisted on the *thana*. On the same night the *thanedar* being afraid of the Captain, who had reprimanded him, committed suicide. The national flag was also flown over the Maddali *tehsil*. Akhtar Ali, with some police constables, reached the spot. He ordered firing and one young man died. Then Badlapur *thana* was attacked. Firing was resorted to, and the people dispersed. A man was locked in the *thana* and severely beaten.

## THE NEW GOVERNMENT OF THE YOUTH

The people, specially the youth of the district, had appointed their spies, whose main task was to inform the people of the movement of the police. The situation became quite uncontrollable for the police, but soon they were reinforced by the Military and with its help the policemen were able to terrorise as well as loot the people. Now the people turned against the quislings. Many *patwaris* and *chowkidars* who were trembling in their shoes tendered resignations. The youth set up their own *chowkis* manned by salaried soldiers in every village. In this way, for many months, the Azad Government gave a fight to the Bureaucracy. If the British Government were terrorising the poor people, tormenting them and robbing them, the Azad Government was also realizing that money from the post-offices and the treasuries.

## REPRESSION

Many youngmen were absconding. The police was running after them, and when staying into villages the people were harassed in a very barbarous manner. Rai-Ambika Prasad Singh was very barbarously treated by one police officer, named Bhup Narayan Singh, his property was destroyed, his elephant was taken to the *thana* and there allowed to die of starvation, his crop was destroyed, his house was levelled to the ground and with its ruins the police *chowki* was constructed. The entire property of Mr. Suresh was destroyed and his house was burnt. His father, who was living in a hut was also not spared by the relentless police and his hut was destroyed. It was at the instigation of Bhup Narayan Singh that many men and women were burnt alive and many respectable ladies were molested. It is said that some 15 leaders of the movement attained martyrdom.

## THE THREE BATTLE GROUNDS

Bandhwa, Danganj and Jalalpur will go down in history as the famous battle grounds of the movement of 1942. It was at these places that the people had to face the violent onslaughts of the Military and police combined. Although the atrocities which were perpetrated by the policemen and their barbarous indulgence were heart-rending, yet the bravery shown by the youth of the district and the tough resistance given by them to the aggressors filled one's heart with pride and admiration.

I cannot resist the temptation of narrating the deeds of valour of 3 young leaders, e. g. Shri Rai Ambika Prasad Singh, Pt. Raja Ram Missir and Dal Singhar Singh. It was under the command of Rai Ambika Prasad Singh that the Azad leaders used to fight the Government soldiers and the police. At one place both the parties lost two soldiers respectively. Raja Ram Missir was entrusted with the task of preventing the police from pillaging and plundering the villagefolks. Dal Singhar Singh was given the task of organizing the Militia, setting up *panchayats* in villages and draw up other constructive schemes.

## SPECIAL FEATURES OF THE REPRESSION

The reader must have got by now some idea of the repressive measures adopted by the Government during 1942 from the accounts given above. Their particular features, as given by Shri Baljit Singh in an article contributed to the 'Samaj', are given below:-

"Firing the people in scorching heat, stripping them naked, hanging them up-side-down and then whipping them making the women naked and then beating them, putting chilli powder in their genitals, putting people in smoky rooms where red chillies were burning, making the naked people crawl on their stomach, and similar inhuman methods were employed by the police to terrorise the people. In the presence of fathers, daughters were molested. In the presence of the fathers, and in the presence of the mothers the children were beaten. At public places women were undressed, and then dragged and subjected to other types of indignities. A new method was innovated. One was posed to sit with legs stretched forward, and two men held his hands and another held his head in-between his thighs, two other men would twist his legs backwards, as a result of which blood would gush out of his genitals result-

ing in his immediate death or rendering his life useless for ever.

There were other more obscene and inhuman methods adopted by the bureaucracy for terrorising the people which, with due regard to decency, are not given here.

## WESTERN ZONE

In the western districts the movement was not so great a success as in the Eastern ones, because of the many reasons which have been already pointed out. In these districts there were many towns and cities in which Muslim population was considerable, who did not take much part in the movement because of the anti-Congress policy followed by the Muslim League. Moreover, these districts were not very much affected by the war conditions because they thought the enemy had to cross a good distance before he could attack them; the peasantry was not so ruthlessly exploited by the landed aristocracy as was the peasantry in the Eastern districts, their economic condition was somewhat better; the landless people were not in so large a number as those of the Eastern districts, and lastly the middle class people, who were never enthusiastic about revolutionary changes, formed the bulk of the population of these districts.

## THE TEMPO OF THE MOVEMENT

The movement was much less in intensity and dimension in this zone, but all the same it had a great tempo, speed and ferocity in Agra, Cawnpore, Lucknow, Pilibhit, Kheri, Meerut, Bijnor, Moradabad, Hardwar, etc. At other places also there were regular *hartals* a demonstrations, and other activities, but the movement was not so well sustained and organized as in the districts mentioned above.

### 8—AGRA DISTRICT

Arrests	...	1000
Detentions	...	155
Collective Fines	...	Rs. 68,195
Firings	...	4 places

Shri Krishna Dutt Paliwal, the then President of the Provincial Congress Committee, had already been arres-

ted. A huge procession was taken out on which *lathi*-charge was made by the police. Despite this the entire procession continued to march on and the police had to retreat and take shelter in *thanas*. From the *thanas* finding themselves secure, the policemen opened fire and the people in their turn hurled stones at them. For three days there was a regular tug of war between the youth and the police which continued for many days. Students left their schools and colleges and took part in their thousands in the anti-British demonstrations. In the first week of the movement about 1,000 Congress workers were arrested. The speed of the movement slackened after a week, but thereafter the sabotage activities gathered momentum around the city. Telephone and telegraph wires were cut and many stations on E.I.R. were burnt. Similar was the treatment meted out to Sikandar, Bhandai and Kithhan railway stations. Many bogies belonging to B.B. & C.I.R. were derailed completely. Two engines were rendered useless while 4 other engines were considerably damaged. A batch of 12 workers mis-handled an Income-tax officer. A mob of 200 strong attacked the Chandola station and as a consequence the police opened fire which resulted in 5 dead and 35 persons wounded. On many occasions firing was resorted to at Agra and in all 25 persons were killed and 100 wounded. The police made a good amount of money from the traitors and merchants who were otherwise to be put behind the prison bars. Students took a prominent part in the movement, and colleges and schools were picketted. The girl students also did not lag behind. Many *thanas* were set on fire. On the 22nd of August, Government Clothing Factory was gutted. From October onward the movement went under-ground and the Congress workers of Agra went to other districts and villages to conduct the movement. The Agra Conspiracy Case was instituted in the month of December 1942. Later on the accused were released. Almost all of them remained in jails for about 3 years.

### 9-CAWNPORE DISTRICT

Convictions	...	394
Detentions	...	203
Collective Fines	... Rs.	1,99,250

Cawnpore is a great industrial centre in Northern India. It throbs with political consciousness and the

tempo of life here is very great. Cawnpore gave a good account of itself during the movement. There are many schools, Colleges, mills and factories in this city. Hallett had great confidence in the police force stationed in Cawnpore, but it miserably failed to handle the situation. In the beginning, peaceful demonstrations were staged, *hartals* were organised and processions were taken out in which the people in their thousands participated. On the 9th of August the people attacked the city Congress office to reconquer it because it had already been taken possession of by the police. Post-Offices were burnt as also lorries and motor-cars plied by Europeans.

By the evening of the 10th August the people had so great a confidence in their strength and ability that open attacks were made on all the police stations and 3 other outposts were also attacked. Everywhere the police opened fire on unarmed mobs, and to terrorise the people further, a Curfew order was promulgated in the city, and fines were imposed on most of the people. In this way the bureaucracy started suppressing the movement in the city.

For a number of days the people continued attacking Government buildings and schools, but very soon the tempo of the movement slackened although small batches of people made stray and sporadic attacks on post offices and other Government institutions. Therefore the movement went underground and the leaders of the underground world took to sabotage and dislocation activities. For fifty days schools and colleges remained closed. The students took a prominent part in the movement, many of them went to the villages, and still others took part in underground activities. Even the mill-hands participated in the movement and refrained from going to their work for a number of days. They would have made a more significant contribution towards the movement if they were not under the evil influence of the communist party.

#### 10—LUCKNOW DISTRICT

Collective Fine      ...      Rs. 55,802

On the morning of 9th August, local leaders were arrested. As a mark of protest, demonstrations were organized and processions were taken out and the students, as usual, played their significant role. On the 11th August the students of Lucknow University, as they were crossing the bridge over the Gomti

and coming to the city, were attacked by the police and firing was made on them. On the other side of the river the people of the city in a huge crowd were awaiting the arrival of the students. They were dispersed under the heavy weight of the *lathi*-charge. The people attacked railway station office, post-offices and other Government institutions. The girl students also figured prominently in the movement and on many occasions they were in the front. When *lathi*-charge were made on them, they sat down and got wounded, but did not retrace their footsteps. The police gave a reply in the form of bullets and *lathi* blows. The situation thus became very tense in the city. Station Offices were burnt colleges and University remained closed for a number of days. Many new recruits in the police force refused making *lathi* charge on the people and were arrested. Even many police constables were very much influenced by the flood of patriotism and if the movement had been prolonged one could have depended upon the active co-operation of most of the police, so remarkable was the change in the psychology of the red-turban army of the Bureaucracy.

#### 11—MORADABAD DISTRICT

Arrests	...	154
Collective fines	...	Rs. 1,7397

On the 11th, a huge procession, some 35 to 40 thousands strong was taken out in which both Hindus and Muslims participated. The procession marched towards the *thanas* and *kuteheries*. The police opened fire and when the situation became uncontrollable, the Military was requisitioned. The Military opened fire, which resulted in the death of 15 persons and injuries to 50. On the 12th, a mob attacked the Railway station and Booking Office, and the people took away with them whatever they could lay their hands upon.

A free lance journalist also fell a victim to the notorious repression enacted by Mr. G.A. Hague. I.C.S., the then Distt. Magistrate and Collector of Moradabad. The said journalist, Mr. Kailash Chandra had been sending correct versions of the atrocities perpetrated by the 'Hague regime' during the 1942 Congress revolution and onwards in the district of Moradabad, in the capacity of a press correspondent. He was removed from service in the District Settlement Office, where he was holding a job

for seven years by the District Magistrate, on the charge of his sending news containing scathing criticism of Government administration in the district.

As an alternative the said journalist was asked by the Administration to submit an apology if he wanted to continue in the employ of the Government. But the young journalist, in order to be true to the honest profession of journalism, preferred to undergo the rigours of unemployment than to surrender to the callous and ignoble dictates of the notorious 'Hague Regime', and accepted the 'sack' with a cheerful smile.

### 12—BIJNOR DISTRICT

Arrests	...	314
Detentions	...	86
Deaths by firing	...	6
Wounded	...	10

On the 9th of August, the Provincial Police Force attacked the District Congress Office and robbed it. Almost all the Congress leaders of the district were arrested. A man-hunt was made in the villages also. The people were growing impatient, specially in the absence of a programme planned by the Congress High Command. By the 9th and 10th owing to wholesale arrests of the leaders, the whole district was astir.

On the 12th, the local students took out a procession which attacked *thanas* and *tehsils* and hoisted national flags on Government buildings. They burnt the post offices and cut the telephone wires.

On the 13th and 14th the students of Chandpur High School and the citizens of Bijnor jointly took out a procession. On the 13th, the National flag was flown over the building of the High School. On the 14th, the processionists smashed the glass panes of the Railway station. On the 16th villages Phoonja, Atmaripur, Godawar, Tajpur, Molhabad, Gopalpur, Dheli, Anthai, and others in the Noorpur police circle, brought out a huge procession and proceeded towards Noorpur *thana*. The processionists destroyed tubewells and P. W. D. bungalows at Faizpur and Gohawar respectively and demolished the post-office at Ratangarh. An armed police force was parading to meet the people at the Noorpur *thana*. Hardly did the procession reach the town, when the police made a *luthi*-charge, but the procession

continued to march on. As it reached the *thana*, the police opened fire as a result of which, some persons died at the spot, and one died in the jail. About 10 persons were wounded by *lathi* blows.

## LIST OF EVENTS

Date	Place and form of the incident.
17-8-42	Provincial Road was breached at Akhera,
20-8-42	Fire was opened on a procession at Haldaur, 6 persons were wounded.
24-8-42	One constable of Shyampur <i>thana</i> was kidnapped
25-8-42	A motor was burnt near Jahanpur.
28-8-42	Wires were cut near Lamba-Khera village.
12-9-42	Kasampur fort was damaged.
17-12-42	Records of the Nagina High School were burnt.
11-11-42	A procession was taken out at Dara Nagar Maila, and wires were cut at many places.

## REPRESSION

Place	Form of repression
Finagram—80 Gurkha soldiers harassed people and plundered their homes.	
Gauhawar—Police robbed the people. Women's ornaments were snatched away.	
Gopalpur—The whole village was looted and robbed	
Dheligram—Village and the standing crops were raided. One man was beaten to unconsciousness.	
Anthai Ahir—A house was looted.	
Akhera Gram—People were robbed by the police.	
Mankuan—People were badly looted and about 80 cattle heads were auctioned for Rs. 700.	

## 13—MUTTRA DISTRICT

Collective fines ... Rs. 46,700

There was a general strike and demonstrations were staged at Muttra. By the 18th August all the workers were rounded up. *Lathi* charge was made on the processionists. Considerable damage was done to telegram and

telephone wires. One engine was derailed at a place near Parkham station. Small children were cordoned by the police as was done at Jallianwala Bagh, and then beaten. Some Muslim butchers and prostitutes, who were witnessing this horrible sight, helped up some of the boys and girls by ropes which were hung down for this purpose.

### *Brindaban*

A huge procession was taken out. *lathi* charge was made and firing was resorted to. Over 20 persons received serious wounds by *lathis* and 6 persons received bullet wounds.

### 14—ALIGARH DISTRICT

There was partial strike in the city. Students of Dharma Samaj College took out a procession and the police made a *lathi* charge in which many children, aged between 8 and 10 died. 450 arrests were made in the district. At Atrauli, the police indulged in fowl and obscene language when a '*satyagrahi*' was arrested. This irritated the man who was arrested and he struck a blow on the head of the police constable. The *Daroga* whipped out his pistol and fired at the man which resulted in his instantaneous death. His brother also was wounded. The dead body was taken with them by policemen. 10 rounds were fired in Aligarh district. Many bridges were destroyed. At more than 20 places wires were cut, and E.I.R. & B.B. & C.I.R. stations at Patti, Hathras and Salempur were attacked and a post-office was burnt at Hardwabganj.

### 15—ALMORA DISTRICT

Arrests	...	850
Convictions	...	650
sentences ranging from 13 to 28 years imprisonment		
Detentions	...	about 80
Collective fines	...	Rs. 53,850

The public of Almora district had been given some idea about the form and nature of the coming struggle and how they were to acquit themselves in it, by their beloved leader Pt. Govind Ballabh Pant. His speech helped to keep the people in a state of preparedness. On the 12th August the popular leader of the district, Pt.

Har Govind Pant, and the President, District Congress Committee, were arrested. Warrant was issued for the arrest of Pt. Madan Mohan Upadhyay. He was touring a village and was exhorting the people to participate in the movement as true non-violent leaders. The police thought that Syt. Upadhyayji had gone to Bombay, but when they came to know that he was exhorting a mass gathering, 10,000 strong, they tracked him but could not succeed in arresting him. The people received the news of the arrest of Mahatma Gandhi and other leaders with a rude shock, but were determined to avenge the national humiliation. Thinking that the police might behave callously if he absconded, Pt. Upadhyayji surrendered himself to the police. But the youth of the district could not tolerate it and many batches were formed, whose main task was to secure his release. The police was so much afraid of the fury of the youth that soon Upadhyayji was released. But later the Government announced a reward of Rs. 2,000 to any man who could arrest him. Later on one Special British Police Officer, with a posse of 50 policemen belonging to the secret service, was despatched to the district for the arrest of Upadhyayji. Many important leaders of the district could not be arrested by the police. These were hard days for the Government and it was not easy for them to control the situation. The villagefolk were strongly united and organized and it was not easy for the authorities to get their cooperation. At many places they could not get even a single grain of food. Even the Tehsildar, Deputy Collector and other officials who were moving from village to village had to go without food for a number of days. They could not dare to lay their hands on the property of the people or to harass them because they were afraid of the organized might of the people. A certain police constable, named Puran Chand Joshi, was sentenced to one year's imprisonment because he had written to the Government that he could discharge his duty only if arrangement was made for his food.

The Government were compelled to requisition the services of hundreds of British soldiers who got unnerved when faced with the organized might of the people. It was a common practice to depute two soldiers as vanguards entrusted with the task of reconnaissance and in case there was no danger, to turn back and give a signal to the army. On the other hand a special type of trumpet, called *Rani Singha*, was used by the people to summon their youngmen to storm any place.

## FIRING AT SULT

The authorities somehow came to know that Upadhyayji was touring in this area. John Saheb with a posse of 100 armed soldiers reached the village Khumadu on the 5th of September. *Rani Singha* was blown, and thousands of youngmen shouting 'quit India' rallied together. Firing was therefore ordered. When the stock of cartridges was exhausted, John Saheb whipped out his own revolver and pressed the trigger, and as a result four persons were killed and many wounded. The passions of people ran high yet in accordance with the instructions of their leaders they remained perfectly non-violent. An old man aged 60 grew exasperated. He dealt a *lathi* blow which was subsequently held up by a Congressite and broke his arm.

## FIRING AT DEGHAAT

Thousands of youngmen assembled at Deghat and the leaders made speeches. The police arrived at the spot but could not arrest the leaders. They went into an ambush and met in a shop nearby. As the people were returning after the meeting had dispersed, they were fired at by the police from the windows.

## STUDENTS OF ALMORA CITY

A procession was taken out by the students of Almora city. Mr. Acton ran towards the students and wanted to snatch the national flag. A *lathi* charge was made. Many students were arrested and were whipped with lashes soaked in oil. Meharban Singh S. D. O. with a posse of police went to Baini, Katyoor and other regions. The villagers were harassed and subjected to various indignities. He returned with 600 Congressmen as his prisoners.

On the 2nd September the Deputy Commissioner, Mr. Misra, with some British soldiers surrounded the Gandhi Ashram. 98 persons were arrested; 36 rooms were looted and the entire Gandhi Ashram was taken under control by him.

## ATROCITIES IN SALAM ILAQA

M. I. Khan with a troop of British soldiers, arrived in the *illaqa* and ordered firing. Two persons were killed. At the same time Meharban Singh, the tyrant arrived

with Jat soldiers who were let loose on the people. Heinous crimes were committed by these Attalic hordes. Houses were burnt and standing crops were destroyed.

### EXEMPLARY WORK OF A BRITISH LADY

During the days of inhuman repression Miss Sarla Behn Cathrine Halliman served the people who were disabled, and the children and women, who had suffered at the hands of the British, and were still suffering in the absence of their male folk. She served these people with the devotion of a mother and as a great humanitarian. She was arrested and convicted to 3 months' imprisonment.

### 16—GARHWAL DISTRICT

Firing	...	At many places
Deaths	...	4
Wounded	...	7
Collective fines imposed	Rs. 5,959-2	

Garhwal is a mountaneous country and is inhabited by a chivalrous and martial race. The people of this district, though mostly illiterate, have given a brilliant account of themselves in almost all the theaters of war, though they fought as mercenaries. They also earned a name for themselves in the freedom's battle. It was Havildar Chandra Singh and his brave Garhali soldiers who were the first to defy the military order at Amritsar and he was the first rebel within the Indian Army. It was the Garhwalis who fought bravely at Kohima and Imphal fronts, and who formed a considerable portion of the Azad Hind Fauj.

### A HUGE STUDENT PROCESSION

The A-I. C. C. passed the 'Quit India' resolution in Bambay. In the district of Garhwal at every place the leaders of the district were explaining the resolution to the people and a programme of activities with regard to the coming struggle was being thrashed out. When the leaders were arrested, the whole district was stirred up. The people of this district plunged headlong into the movement. As elsewhere, the students of this district took a prominent part in the nation's battle for

liberty. They took out a huge procession. Some local men also joined them. The procession marched towards the court. They did not mean to inflict any physical injury on anybody. All that they wanted was to hoist a national flag on the court. The police was terror-stricken and it was almost impossible for it to disperse the processionists. The Military was summoned and firing was ordered.

### DEPUTY COMMISSIONER CALLS OFF FIRING

Since the procession was formed mostly of the children of the military officers, officials of the court and loyalists, and was led by the son of a Rai Bahadur, the Deputy Commissioner was approached by their guardians and was told that if he did not call off the firing, the whole district would turn anti-British. The Deputy Commissioner was forced to comply with the wishes of these people. The processionists hoisted the flag on the court which was later on removed by the police and the court was heavily guarded by the military.

### POLICE TICKLED

All the local Congress leaders were arrested, but there were many workers of Congress *mandals* who were still tickling the police. At many places request was made by the local authorities to be aided by the Military in tracing out the absconding workers because they knew that the absconding elements were busy in promoting some constructive activities.

### FORMATION OF NATIONAL GOVERNMENT

At many places courts were set up by the people and training centres were opened for the recruitment of freedom's soldiers. British administration was completely paralysed. Students of local schools left the schools and cooperated with their leaders in the formation of the National Government. Even small children were interested in the knotty problems of politics. They worked as the carriers of news and as errand boys and thus helped their leaders to the best of their ability. They had been recruited as members of *Bal Sena*.

Thus boys used to move from village to village keeping the people well posted with the information about the conditions in the country. Their main task was to counteract the rumours spread by the Government and also to warn the people to keep themselves ready and to brave

the repressive measures that were likely to be adopted by the Government.

In the Gujru *ilaga*, almost all the new departments had begun to function in a very efficient manner. The police dared not interfere with the work started by the new Government. When the military was requisitioned, the people resisted it in a non-violent manner.

The movement was in full swing in almost all the parts of the district, but it was conducted in an organized manner. A meeting of the workers of the whole district was convened in the first week of September at an unknown place. Many decisions were arrived at in the meeting and a concerted attack on courts at Lansdowne and Pauri was one of the plans. But somehow the authorities came to know of this conspiracy and the courts were put under heavy Military guard. At one or two places firing was resorted to which resulted in the death of 5 persons, and 7 persons were wounded.

### REPRESSION

It has been made clear that the police miserably failed in suppressing the people in the district. At many places the Military had to be requisitioned but the Indian soldiers failed to suppress the movement because they were not prepared to barbarously treat their own brethren. Later on a police patrol, officered by some British officers, was despatched for quelling the rebellion. The Deputy Commissioner, an Englishman, sent such police patrols to different places in the district. Most of the Congress leaders would not be arrested because they felt that instead of going to jails they could utilize their time in furthering constructive activities. Even the Military failed at many places to control the situation and to arrest the leaders. The Government adopted another measure to force the people to submit to them. The Military soldiers began to harass the relations of the absconding workers. Military soldiers used to break open the houses of these people and tormented the inmates. Everywhere similar treatment was meted out to the people. Small children were beaten, women were molested and were thrown out of the houses. They were robbed of their ornaments. Men-folk were beaten. Although in the beginning, methods of terrorisation and intimidation were exclusively used to harass the inmates of the houses of the absconding leaders only, but later on this practice was universally adopted all over the

district, and at many places the public was terrorised and tormented by the soldiers.

In all the following districts, the movement started with *hartals*, protest meetings, strikes etc. in the usual manner, but nothing of striking importance happened. Moreover despite best efforts, I have not been able to get any details of the movement in these districts. The duration was short, and the signs of the movement did not last more than two months. In Meerut and Kheri, the fire spread out in the rural areas. Pilibhit also gave a splendid battle, and the people there put up a long and sustained struggle.

<i>Places</i>	<i>Arrests</i>	<i>Convictions</i>	<i>Detentions</i>	<i>Collective fines</i> <i>Rs.</i>
Dehradun	—	—	—	1,000
Saharanpur	—	—	—	54,673
Muzaffarnagar	46	44	6	6,000
Meerut	248	245	359	1,67,432
Bulandshahr	137	170	67	32,258-2-3
Mainpuri	232	37	19	21,200
Etah	—	—	—	3,560-5-4
Bareilly	—	—	188	7,712
Badaun	8	4	11	4,500
Shahjahanpur	—	—	—	1,229
Pilibhit	127	83	7	—
Farrukhabad	—	—	—	11,575
Etawah	44	14	19	89,339-4-0
Fatehpur	43	26	12	18,750
Banda	—	—	—	2,000
Hamirpur	13	13	27	1,850
Jhansi	41	36	10	3,850
Jalaun	—	—	—	2,905
Mirzapur	—	—	—	10,190
Basti	146	86	193	4,450
Nainital	19	8	28	22,711-2-1
Unao	28	22	179	5,750
Bareilly	—	—	—	3,300
Hapur	107	79	47	—
Hardoi	107	64	112	6,672

				<i>Rs.</i>
Kheri	67	41	17	38,323
Fyzabad	43	14	40	26,950
Bahraich	42	87	6	—
Sultanpur	—	—	—	700
Partapgarh	—	—	—	12,450
Barabanki	83	53	25	7,500

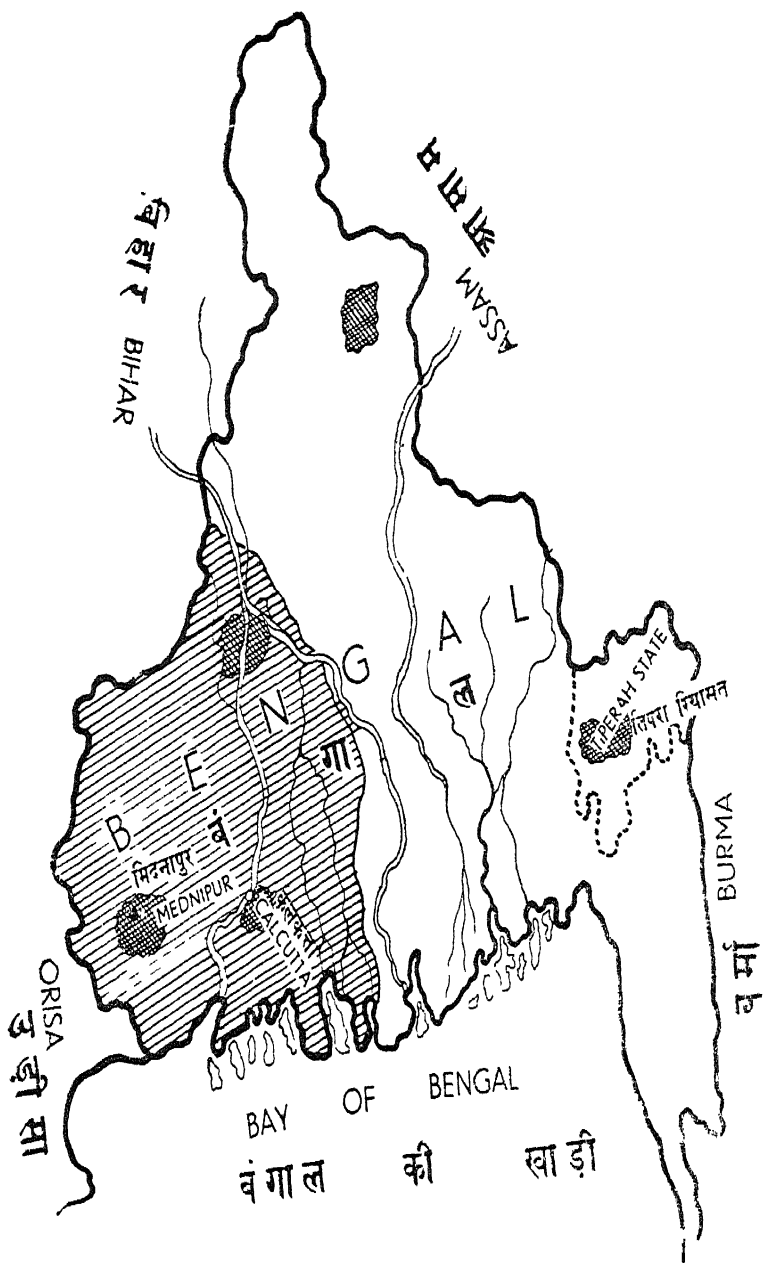
## CHAPTER VII

### BENGAL

No. of persons in detention before the Movement	...	2,000
Arrests.	...	2,878
Convictions	...	358
<i>Hartals</i>	...	114
Meetings	...	168
Processions	...	222
<i>Lathi</i> charges	...	68 occasions
Firings	... 44 occasions and at 16 places	
Tear gas	...	11 occasions.
Post offices destroyed or damaged	more than	118
Union Boards destroyed or damaged	more than	57
Debt Settlement Boards destroyed or damaged		21
<i>Panchayati</i> Unions destroyed	... more than	20
Dak-Bungalows destroyed or damaged		14
Flag hoisting on Govt. buildings		20
No. of <i>thanas</i> attacked, destroyed or damaged		11
Excise shops destroyed or damaged		26
Protest meetings by non-Congress bodies		21
Resignations	...	137
Suspension of practice	...	2699
Picketing (courts, stations, etc.)		32 places
Courts attacked and damaged...		6
Labour strikes	...	40

### DISLOCATIONS

Trams burnt or destroyed	...	18
Telephone wires snapped	...	69 areas
Rails removed or damaged	...	16 places





Bridges and culverts destroyed	30
Rly. and steamer stations attacked and damaged	14
Collective fines	Rs. 85,000
Houses seized	8
Government places seized	33
Government institutions attacked and damaged	30
Khasmahal offices destroyed	6
Sub-Registry offices destroyed	4
Zamindari Kutcheries destroyed	18
Government arms captured	13 guns, 2 swords
Congress offices sealed	16

### SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONDITIONS OF BENGAL

Bengal is an autonomous Province, lying in the plains of the lower Ganges, and the Delta of the Ganges-Brahmaputra, with the Himalyas on the North. The climate is warm and humid. The people are engaged in agriculture, raising indigo, jute, opium, rice, tea, cotton and sugar. Coal, iron and copper-mines are worked in Burdwan. The manufactures are mainly of cotton and jute. Low-lying alluvial plains are formed by the Ganges and the Brahmaputra, which contain a remarkable net-work of water-ways formed by the deltas of the two rivers. The lower half of the Province, Sundarban, consists of half submerged mangrove, swamps with dense forests. The ports are all upstream on the two main river estuaries, the Hooghli in the west and the Padma in the east. Bengal is one of the most productive and populous parts of the world. Four-fifths of its area produces rice, and there are modern jute factories in Howrah. The forests are under expert supervision. The population is made up of 53<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> Mohammedans and 43% Hindus. The prevailing language is Bengali. The area of the British territory in Bengal is 77,521 Sq. miles, and the population is 5,10,87,338.

The Presidency consists of 28 districts, namely Burdwan, Birbhum, Bankura, Midnapore, Hooghli, Howrah, 24 Parganas, Calcutta, Nadia, Murshidabad, Jessore, Khulna, Rajshahi, Dinajpur, Jalpaiguri, Darjeeling, Rangpur, Bogra, Pabna, Malda, Dacca, Mymensingh, Faridpur, Bakarganj, Tippera, Noakhali and Chittagong.

### BACKGROUND

Bengal is a predominantly agricultural province; the

population is homogenous in dress, diet, language and culture. The people are emotional by nature, temperamentally sensitive, intellectually sharp, and quick and passionate in their reactions. Naturally, these factors and qualities have a great bearing upon the tempo of the struggles in Bengal.

Bengal is known very rightly as the cradle of Indian nationalism, and the home of terrorist activities. It had been in the vanguard of all the nationalist struggles upto 1930, but after that Bengal's politics took an unhappy turn. Party dissensions went a long way to create an unhealthy atmosphere for any struggle. The innate tendency of the Bengalee character towards either terrorism or conspiracy has led the Bengalee youngmen mostly towards secret activities and conspiracy. They have a natural instinctive dislike for open and constructive work, and have, therefore no robust faith in the Gandhian ideology. All these factors, have in turn, had a great bearing upon the nature and progress of nationalist struggles, and have considerably damaged the chances of open mass-movements in Bengal.

Besides this, the leadership in Bengal originally came from the upper classes, which comprised mostly of Hindu landlords, who led Bengal in all socio-cultural spheres of life. Later on with the growth of the Nationalist movement, middle class youngmen, guided mostly by emotion and driven by economic factors, constituted the rank and file of the Nationalist struggles. In fact, emotionalism has been the bed-rock on which the nationalist struggle thrived there. Both Hindus and Muslims, joined these nationalist risings with enthusiasm. But during the last few years the growing communal conflict in the whole of India whose causes I need not discuss here, has had a great effect on Bengal politics. The growing influence of the Muslim League over the Muslim masses, in the name of religion, has also hindered the natural growth of the mass movements in predominantly Muslim areas. The composition of population in Bengal is very evenly balanced. In the two western Divisions the Hindus predominate, while in the two eastern Commissionerships the Muslims are in preponderance. This has resulted during these days of communal excitement and tension, in a sort of hostility, or indifference, of the Muslim masses towards the Nationalist struggle, which, unfortunately, they are being led to feel as being antagonistic to their own interests. Therefore, the movement has been mostly confined

either to the politically conscious areas in Burdwan division such as Midnapur, Hooghli, portions of Jalpaiguri, Birbhum, and Atrai, etc, or to places where the Congress leaders have been inspired by Gandhian leadership, with its fullest stress on open constructive field-work, or to those areas in the eastern zone where the Jamait-ul-Ulema or the Krishak Proja Party have their hold on the Muslims, as in Noakhali, Tippera, Sylhet and Sulchar districts. Undoubtedly, many other socio-economic factors, such as the inconvenience and hardship perpetrated upon the people as a result of the direct impact of the war, their appalling poverty and the psychological excitement and panic in areas falling directly under the shadow of an impending Jap attack largely contributed to the flare-up in the August of 1942.

I must confess that Bengal has not so splendidly reacted to the message of "do or die" and the slogan of 'quit India' as it was expected to do, for the many reasons given above. I have refrained from discussing provincial politics, though it has a great bearing on the growth of the movement. It is only the part played by Midnapur which has saved Bengal's honour. It has really shown to the Bengalis that if proper constructive work is done and a direct approach to the masses is made, and the people are trained in the Gandhian ways of organisation, Bengal can also lead in open mass movements. Bengal has intelligence, energy and all other favourable objective conditions, such as the growing unemployment among the educated people, the appalling poverty of the masses and an intense hatred for the British system of administration. These are in fact the main causes and props of any mass struggle.

### 1. MIDNAPORE

Patriotic India hails Midnapore as the most valiant district in India which has suffered most in both men and material, and left behind a glorious record of achievements during the 'open rebellion' of 1942. The place which the people of Paris hold in the history of the French Revolution, is the place that has been won for themselves by the people of Midnapore in the history of the August Movement. Midnapore was ravaged by both men and nature, but the brave District acquitted itself magnificently well. Midnapore was swept by violent storms, both political and natural, but its people refused to

bow before them, and continued their uphill journey. For full two years it had a Congress National Government. So skillfully and efficiently was the small republic of Midnapore run, that even its worst opponents, the British and their Indian hirelings had nothing but unreserved praise for it.

### THE BACKGROUND

The Centai and Tamluk sub-divisions of Midnapore district were hit very hard owing to the waremergency. Private property, and the lives of the people were unsafe, and callously ignored. There was a regular movement of the troops on the so called Ranchi-Centai air-line. At every five miles between these two places an aerodrome was constructed, and the people were not only evicted from those places but were forced to work for the construction of the aerodromes. The troops were being concentrated over these regions resulting in severe cuts in the supply of commodities for civil-consumption. The miseries of the people were further accentuated by strict restrictions put upon the usual transport services. Even bi-cycles and bullock-carts were not allowed to be made use of. In this way famine conditions were created, though a natural cataclysm on an un-precedented scale was yet to come.

Despite universal public opinion to the contrary, a tax was levied on the people, and every one irrespective of his or her economic position, was forced to purchase war-bonds, not to say of the war-contributions that the people were forced to make. Stringent repressive measures had already been taken by the authorities, curtailing all the civil rights of the people, much before the movement broke out in the District. The innumerable miseries of the people, in conjunction with the nerve-racking fear of the Japanese attack, conspired to change the psychology of the people, and filled their head and hearts with antagonism towards the Government.

Mahatma Gandhi had started writing and speaking of 'quit India' resolution many months before it was passed by the Working Committee, and ratified by the A-I C.C. in Bombay on August 8, 1942. The people of Midnapore had already planned to run a parallel administration in the District. A large number of volunteers were recruited and many camps were opened in the District. Thus when the civil administration was completely paralysed in this District, the intervening period between the cessation of

the British rule and the establishment of the people's republic was very brief, and uncharacterised by chaos and anarchy. Everything was smooth and systematic, and much before the British rule showed signs of decline in the District, the people had established their own Government.

### CHARACTERISTIC FEATURES

As elsewhere, after the arrest of the national leaders there were *hartals*, processions and demonstrations in Midnapore District but unlike elsewhere the fret and fury actually raged about two months later. During the intervening period mammoth meetings were held, attended by thousands of people, both Hindus and Muslims, men and women, where free and frank discussions took place on the Bombay Resolution, and where the declaration of freedom was read with enthusiasm. Demonstrations before law-courts, Government offices and *thanas* became a regular feature. The declaration of freedom was read even in the *thanas*, particularly in the Mahishdal *Thana*. War was declared on the British, and reviews were made of the war conditions both in the east and the west. The S. D. O. of Tamluk sub-division, Shri Sheik, I. C. S., arrived on the scene with armed police. He ordered his men to open fire, which the latter refused to do. Mr. Sheik returned, leaving the *thana* under the charge of the people. This was the first interference made by the Government, and they had to withdraw. The people of the District started their own paper, printed on Letho-machine, viz., 'Viplavi', forestalling the censor imposed by the Government on newspapers. Not only that, much before the movement started the people had made adequate arrangements for postal delivery, because they knew that the Government would not provide them with postal facilities. All the Congress units were connected for this purpose, and volunteers were engaged to carry on their duties as post-boys.

The other characteristic feature of this movement in Midnapore District was that at a time when people were recklessly fired upon, villages looted, houses burnt and women molested, not a single government official was killed, though many were imprisoned. The only penalty which the people inflicted on these tyrants was that they were forced to tender resignation and fill a bond for their loyalty to the Congress. When the people's republic was established most of the Government officials were taken

prisoner, but they were kindly treated and given fares to return to their native places.

### NATURE OF THE MOVEMENT

The politically conscious, and the essentially Congress-minded District of Midnapur, burst into unusual activity on the arrest of its beloved Congress leaders at Bombay. There was hardly a village where a meeting was not held and a procession taken out. Colleges and schools closed down, and regular picketing of courts, hats and liquor shops was started. Later the movement took a serious turn, and the attacking of the symbols of Government authority became a common feature. Stamps and records of post offices throughout the district were burnt. Records and buildings of 20 to 30 Union Boards were destroyed or damaged. Records of the *Panchayat* Union and Debt Settlement Boards were also destroyed at a number of places. Quite a good number of buildings of the unions and boards were burnt. Dak-Bungalows at a number of places were levelled down. Excise shops also came in for a good deal of attention. Records of and opium stocked in more than a dozen shops were destroyed. Several sub-magistrates' offices and *Khasmahal* offices were burnt or damaged. A number of *thanas* were attacked and captured, sometimes by crowds numbering 20 to 30 thousand, their records were destroyed and the buildings burnt or damaged. Many toll-bars, sanitary inspectors' offices, police quarters and Government boats were destroyed.

### PARALLEL GOVERNMENT

In the whole of the District, all roads, bridges and culverts were effectively damaged, telegraph wires were cut, posts removed, and boats sunk, so that isolation was full and complete. *Swaraj Panchayats* were formed and the Bureaucratic British administration was totally liquidated for some time. Civil administration came under the control of national leaders. Parallel organisations, such as courts, *thanas*, jails and camps, were established in some parts of the locality. Thus, parts of Midnapur had for sometime a sort of National Government, established by the people in the face of the armed might of the British. These National courts administered justice and decided some of the pending cases. Their volunteers acted as the National Police.

And, in spite of the fact that practically the whole of the District was thus occupied it must be said to the eternal credit of the organisers of the movement that not a single instance has been reported where a Government servant may have been killed or injured. The people of the District, who had for long tolerated the heartless and inhuman barbarities of a callous bureaucracy, and still remained perfectly non-violent, richly deserve our congratulations.

Charts A and B given hereunder give a clear idea of the activities of the national Government and the repression of the same by the Bureaucracy. Remarks attached to the Charts shall further elucidate the exact nature of the fight.

# CHART A

## CONGRESS & NATIONAL GOVERNMENT ACTIVITIES AUGUST 1942 to AUGUST 1944

### SUB-DIVISION OF TAMLUK, DISTRICT MIDNAPUR, BENGAL

Thanas	Police Station	After Occupation burning of enemy's camp and kutcheries										Arms seized & destroyed		Dislocation of Communications					Post & Telegraphs			
		Offices and Kacheri										British Officers arrested & released	Guns	Swords	No of places cut in L.B.Rd. & D.B. Rd.	Falling of big trees on roads	No. of bridges destroyed	Wires cut (in miles)		Broken		
		Police Station	Sub-Registry Office	Post-Offices	Khas Mahal	Office	Excise shops	Dak Bungalows	D.S. Boards	Union Boards	Panchayat Boards										Zamindari	Kutcheri
Invasion No.	Occupation	Police Station	Sub-Registry Office	Post-Offices	Khas Mahal	Office	Excise shops	Dak Bungalows	D.S. Boards	Union Boards	Panchayat Boards	Zamindari	Kutcheri	Dresses of chowkidars	British Officers arrested & released	Guns	Swords	No of places cut in L.B.Rd. & D.B. Rd.	Falling of big trees on roads	No. of bridges destroyed	Wires cut (in miles)	Broken
1	1	1	1	6	1	3	3	3	6	4	—	4	114	12	6	2	5	5	12	—	—	—
1	—	—	1	6	—	5	—	—	5	2	6	5	40	—	—	—	—	5	10	15	—	—
4	—	1	—	1	—	7	1	1	2	1	8	15	124	1	—	—	—	8	7	3	16	154
1	—	—	—	—	—	2	—	—	1	2	2	—	72	—	—	—	—	2	25	—	11	40
—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Sub-Divisional office	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Total	7	1	2	2	13	1	17	4	14	9	16	24	350	13	6	2	20	47	30	27	194	—

Activities of the National Govt.															
Thana	Cases				Fines				Meetings			Relief Works			
	(Thana & Sub-division)	Union Panchayat	Registration of documents	Filed	Disposed of	Searches	Arrests and releases	No. of persons fined	Amount	Other punishments	Public	Indoor	In cash	Cost of kinds	Total
Sutahata	1	—	—	836	516	67	34	134	8,704	29	794	1,504	7,467-2-0	Rs. 14,002	Rs. 21,469-2-0
Nandigram	1	—	—	222	172	5	12	32	426	19	706	1,222	3,182-3-0	9,715	12,897-3-0
Mahishdal	1	2	66	1055	556	117	191	259	17,395-15	97	843	1,633	7,762-0-0	19,582	27,344-0-0
Tamluk	1	4	—	794	437	62	41	118	7,412	18	491	331	4,859-0-0	2,873	7,732-0-0
Panchkura	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	205	186	825-2-3	598	423-2-3
Mayna	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	115	138	900-0-0	559	1,459-0-0
Sub-Divisional office	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	4,238-0-0	2,283	6,521-0-0
Total	5	6	66	2,907	1,681	251	278	543	33,937-15	163	3,154	5,014	29,233-7-3	49,612	78,845-7-3

## REMARKS

1. Those camps of the enemy, which were not possible to keep in possession for a long time, were destroyed according to 'Scorched Earth' policy.
2. The arrested officers of the British Government were very kindly treated and were sent to their countries with travelling expenses.
3. The seized weapons were never used but were destroyed.
4. In a single night, and within 3 or 4 hours on 28th September, 42, 90 per cent. of the enemy's traffic and communications were dislocated and destroyed.
5. The repeated attacks of the people brought the British Authority in the sub-division to a temporary end. A National Government was formed on the 17th December, 42. It was expected that in future India would become a Federation and the National Government of this Sub-Division would form a part of it. Although the constitution of this Government was to be most democratic, our Sub-Divisional Government was, actually conducted by a Dictator. The first dictator was appointed by the Sub-Divisional Congress Committee and he was empowered to nominate his successor, who however, had to receive the approval of the Sub-Divisional Congress Committee. They had in all 4 successive Sub-Divisional Dictators, the last having surrendered in the obedience to the orders of Mahatma. The Dictator had to carry on the activities of the Government with the help of a Cabinet. The Cabinet members had different portfolios, the principal of which were those of Education, Justice, Finance Relief and Reconstruction. The dictator with his cabinet was responsible to the Sub-Divisional Congress Committee. Similar National Governments were formed in various Thanas with the same constitution and responsibility. Union Panchayats were formed in various Unions as branches of National Government.

6. Many complicated cases which were existing for a long time in Sub-Divisional, Zilla and High Courts of the British Government were disposed of in courts of National Government.
7. Among other punishments warning and detention till rising of the court were current. The amount realised as fines was spent in Relief works.
8. There were numerous processions, in which people of all sects and religions participated; the numbers varying from two hundred to ten thousand. persons Generally, these processions terminated in public meetings. On the day of attack on the enemy's police-stations, some forty thousand non-violent persons having no weapons in their hands concentrated in some of these Thanas.
9. "Hartal" was observed on many occasions, sometimes throughout the Sub-Division and sometimes in particular areas. The students of almost all the High Schools joined strikes quite frequently and did not attend school even at the time of their Examinations.
10. Relief Works:--Food, clothing, medicine, diet milk etc. were distributed to the needy and distressed people as gratuitous relief. After the great cyclone and flood of 1942, rescue work of the distressed, removal of the dead bodies of animals, removal of fallen trees from roads and tracks, and other first-aid works had been taken up. With the voluntary help of the villagers, public roads and 40 miles of embankments of the river were prepared within a week.
11. During the period of Famine, following the cyclone, the Congress workers who came out after imprisonment formed a non-official Relief Committee and spent about 1 lac of rupees as relief in various forms to the distressed people of the sub-division. This Committee was the only non-official Relief Committee formed locally in this Sub-Division and its work was highly appreciated by the leaders of the province as well as by the officers of the British Government.

CHART B  
BRITISH GOVERNMENT ACTIVITIES  
AUGUST 1942 to August 1944  
SUB-DIVISION OF TAMLUK, DISTRICT MIDNAPORE

Name of the thanas	Shooting			Outrages on Women						Burning of houses					
	No. of places	No. of times	Dead	No. of wounded	No. of persons who got slight injury	No. of women raped	No. of women attempted to be raped	Assaults and outraging modesty	Assaults on men	No. of arrests	Illegal detentions	Detention under D.I. Rules	Special Police	No. of houses burnt	Total loss
Sutahata	4	4	2	6	8	1	7	45	1007	337	963	3	84	78 Rs.	105,205
Nandigram	4	4	14	23	38	10	8	19	782	385	823	2	135	15	14,150
Mahisadal	10	13	16	104	69	49	11	40	1338	756	2001	1	86	31	20,145
Tamluk	4	4	12	66	27	3	5	28	798	273	896	2	89	—	—
Punchkura	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	10	112	33	132	—	—	—	—
Mayna	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	8	189	75	261	1	7	—	—
Total	22	25	44	199	142	63	31	150	4226	1859	5076	9	401	124	139,500

Thanas	Breaking of houses.			Looting & Damage			Attachment of prop.					Collective fines	
	No. of houses	Loss	No. of houses	Loss	Rs.	Rs.	No. of houses occupied	No. of houses searched	No. of families	Value of property	No of unions	Amount	No. of organisations declared illegal.
Sutahata	3	675	207	91,842	9	9280	24	3052	11	50,000	3		
Nandigram	4	500	394	70,890	4	917	9	810	12	50,000	6		
Mahishdal	41	6800	304	21,176	6	2262	15	1928	9	50,000	4		
Tamluk	1	100	104	15,487	8	1030	8	6075	6	25,000	3		
Panchkura	—	—	10	1,000	—	63	1	8500	3	15,000	2		
Mayna	—	—	25	2,400	—	178	2	5000	—	—	1		
Total	49	8075	1044	202,795	27	13,730	59	25,365	41	790,000	19		

## THE 'VIDYUT VAHINI'

The military flank of the republic, called '*Vidyutvahini*', was first organised in Mahishadan and later formed in Tamluk and Nandigram. In each *Vidyutvahini* there was a General Commanding Officer, and a Commandant. It was divided into three Departments (1) War Department, (2) Information Department, and (3) Assistance and Relief Department. Trained doctors, compounders, stretcher-bearers and nurses were attached to the third department. So good was the work performed by this National Army that even the bureaucracy had to say some good words about it.

It appeared from the activities of the insurgents of Midnapur District in Bengal that everything was going on in accordance with a premeditated plan. Deep thought and foresight characterised their activities. Their code of signalling and communicating warnings was particularly original. Their modes of propagating an idea or executing a secret plan were in perfect accord with a pre-arranged method. These good points occur in a book entitled 'Some facts About the Disturbances in India', a Government publication.

To all intents and purposes, the *Vidyutvahini* was the national army of the National Government. Later on three new departments were opened viz. (1) Guerlla, (2) Army of Sisters and (3) Peace and Order. This last department rounded up all the notorious dacoits and thieves, who had previously been let loose on the people by the government to create confusion and anarchy. Cases were instituted against these dacoits and thieves before the National Government. Those found guilty were punished according to the letter of the law.

Shri Satish Chandra Samant, an eminent Congress Leader of Tamluk sub-division was appointed as the first dictator of the National Government. Under his leadership government became very popular. Those succeeding him were, Shri A. K. Mukerjee. S. C. Sahu and Sri Varada Kant,

Charts No. A and B will clearly indicate that if the sufferings of the people of Midnapore were numerous and heart-rending the record of the achievements of, and services rendered by, the Congress and National Government were equally more numerous and magnificent,

## REPRESSION

But all this was not achieved without a price and rather a heavy one. Repression in Midnapur was of a type and intensity which resembled the activities of Germans in occupied territories as advertised by British Agencies.

From tear-gas to *lathi*; from *lathis* to firing, and from firing to machine-gunning from air, was a regular course of events. From house searches to merciless beating of men, women, and children; from beating to looting of houses; from looting to burning them and from burning of houses to outraging the modesty of women, was the natural progress of official terrorism. The brave patriots of Midnapur suffered all this, and the many more atrocities perpetrated by the agents of British Imperialism, a brief description of which will not be out of place.

The suffering, which the people of Midnapore had to undergo fall under two categories—the cataclysmic ravages of nature, and then the brutal oppression by the ‘civilised’ British Government. I deal first with the planned and organised barbarism of the Government, carried on through miscellaneous British Agents.

## BRITISH SAVAGERY

1. On the 2nd April, Sir John Herbert, the late *jabardast* and heartless ruler of Bengal, threw ‘on the floors’ of the Bengal Legislature his Atom Bomb of *Denial policy* under the camouflage of war-time necessity—that elastic British selfishness. The Congress Party staged an immediate walk-out and then the ‘Denial Policy’ to the shame of that rump assembly, was carried through. It meant the taking away of hundreds of thousands of boats and cycles from sea-side Districts although these were the only means of water and inland transport in that part of Bengal.

2. In the wake of the denial policy, orders under the D. I. Rules came thick and fast in the shape of “censorship” of essential news, restrictions on the entry of leaders into the District, house internments and other forms of repression. I am giving below figures from a single sub-District.

3. In sub-district Tamluk alone there were 25 cases of fone of shooting in 22 different places with 44 dead and 199 wounded.

4. 72 women were raped by the ‘enlightened’ and ‘democratic’ soldiers. In one place 42 women were raped

in mass scale in broad day light. 31 attempted rapes were thwarted by desperate villagers. 150 women were inhumanly oppressed.

5. 4226 men were mercilessly assaulted in different parts of Tamluk.

6. 1868 persons were imprisoned, 5076 persons were interned, to be set free later on after torture, 9 persons were served with special notices to serve as special constables.

7. 124 houses were burnt by soldiers to cinders with kerosene and petrol. The approximate value of lost property would be Rs. 139,500. 49 houses were destroyed, involving a loss of Rs. 8075. 1044 houses were looted by the British soldiers, and a booty of Rs. 212,795 was taken away as the glittering prize. 59 houses, costing Rs. 25,365 were fortified and 27 seized. Collective fines, that wonderful British adaptation of Fascist methods totalled Rs. 190,000 in 41 unions. 21 organisations were declared illegal and 5730 houses were searched for nationalist literature, styled as 'objectionable leaflets'.

This sort of wanton aggression was carried on unscrupulously and vindictively in every other sub-district of Midnapore.

## THE GREAT CYCLONE

On the 16th of October a terrific cyclone coming from the Bay of Bengal, passed over the whole of the District of Midnapur. The velocity of the wind, it is reported, was 460 miles per hour. It was accompanied by heavy rain, at certain places as heavy as 12 inches in less than 24 hours. In the afternoon there was a high tidal bore, forced up by the tornado from the Bay, which swept over the dykes in a fearful wave about 10 ft. higher than the top of the southern parts of Midnapore.

What passed over Midnapur on the 16th cannot be called a cyclone but a cataclysm, the like of which has not been witnessed in Bengal within living memory. The All-India Radio reported that the extensive disaster which befell the people of Midnapur at that time had never before been witnessed in India, except during the earthquake of Quetta. The commandant of the D.C.L.I. Platoon stationed at Contai is reported to have observed that the devastation of Contai was ten times greater than that of Tobruk when the latter fell. The waves struck

and broke the embankment at Tamluk and Contai, and rolled through the villages, knocking down houses and trees, and sweeping the jellied men and animals into one massive destruction. 40,000 men, at a very conservative estimate, were drowned, about 80% of the houses collapsed, 75% of the cattle lost their lives, and practically the whole crop was destroyed.

The reports which I have received about the callousness and indifference of some of the officers, even after the cyclone, perhaps find no parallel in the annals of even an un-civilised administration. The seismograph records were fully known to the officials, and the timely issue of a note of warning would have saved many lives; but, out of spite, no such step was taken, and after the storm, this tale of woe produced only a chuckle in these circles, and the whisper went round—'let the rebels die'. In this age of broadcasting and the rule of the fourth estate, the press, this news remained suppressed for 18 days. The publication of the report of this havoc was prohibited by the Press Censor, and the first Government Press Note on the disaster was published on the 3rd November, 18 days after the occurrence.

Indiscriminate *lathi* charges, repeated firing, looting, burning of hundreds of houses belonging to innocent persons and educational institutions, and similar measures initiated by the government, had failed to stop the movement. The exasperated District and Sub-Divisional authorities decided to take advantage of the natural calamity to wreak vengeance on the helpless and dying people of Midnapur. The District Magistrate and the S.D.O. openly said that no relief should be given to the suffering people, that they should be left to face the terrible consequences of the grim disaster, and that no non-official relief committees should be allowed to work in Midnapur. The District Magistrate sent a telegram to the Chief Secretary to the Bengal Government, which said that 'No outsider shall be allowed to do relief work in this district. This district is the abode of rebels only. One Officer's written report to the Government was that relief, whether organised by the Government or any private agency, should be withheld for a month, and thereby the people taught a permanent lesson. Relief measures adopted by local officers were utterly inadequate. Even *bona fide* private relief workers from Calcutta, though they produced their credentials, found themselves in jail under the Defence of India Rules. In the presence of the

District Magistrate reports were received by Dr. Shyama Prasad Mookerjee that boats were not made available on that fateful evening, or even later, to save the lives of the people who were perilously holding on for a brief while on the roofs of their houses, which ultimately collapsed. One gentleman gave a harrowing description of the manner in which he and others begged of officers to allow them to ply a boat for a couple of hours, in order to rescue some men, women and children lying near the area concerned. This request was summarily rejected, and the men who had used the boat were threatened with dire consequences. Later on, all the people whom this party wanted to rescue were washed away, never to be found again. Of the cows that remained, although they were yielding milk, and some were with calf, a good many were snatched away from private houses by the police and the military for the purpose of feeding the army. The little rice that had been spared by nature was purchased in hot haste and stored by the Government, ostensibly for the use of the people in distress; but while men actually died of starvation, their only consolation was the knowledge that they were dying in the midst of plenty; that they could entertain high hopes of getting the rice, stored by their British rulers, in the world hereafter! According to British statements, these deaths were due to disease and heart-failures. Surplus rice stinking in godowns, and men dying of starvation, this paradox was possible only under the civilised banner of British jingoism!

Such inhuman callousness is indeed unparalleled. It was criminal neglect of duty and utter disregard of the human decency on the part of Government officers to have kept the area without any relief whatsoever, and not to have allowed any non-official, philanthropic bodies to give relief to the suffering humanity, only because they made a manifestation of their desire for liberty.

## FIRINGS

Tear-gas for blinding the eyes, and *lathis* for breaking the skulls of the people are a common-place and handy weapon in the British armoury, meant for everyday use, and as such we need not go into their details. We begin with firing, which was resorted to at 13 places, killing 75 and injuring 210 persons.

## AT MAHISGOTH

On 22nd Sep. 42 the S.D.O., S.D.P.O. and a posse of armed constables went to the locality, surrounded a number of houses in the neighbouring villages and forced the villagers to repair the roads. The villagers collected together and protested against forced labour, but when the overseer promised to pay proper wages for the work and requested them to allow the work being done, the crowd began to disperse. In the meantime there was a heavy shower of rain, and the workers took shelter from it under the trees on the bank of the Mahisgoth tank, at a distance of about a furlong from the cut. At this time police reinforcements came along from the sub-divisional quarter. On their arrival the S. D. O. with the armed force, hurriedly walked up from the cut towards the people, and a severe *lathi* charge began. At this the people threw some brickbats. The police then fired 30 rounds, as a result of which 24 persons were wounded. A boy proceeded to give water to a wounded man but received a bayonet charge. The police dragged 3 wounded persons by their legs from the bank of the Mahisgoth tank right upto the Contai town. On the way 2 succumbed, and the third died in the hospital.

## AT BELBANI

The S. D. O. and the S. P. with a batch of armed constables raided the volunteers' camp at Belbani, assaulted the volunteers sleeping there, and burnt down all the articles of the camp on 27th September. The party then proceeded towards the village, and was faced with a crowd. The police opened fire to disperse the crowd. As a result of it three persons died on the spot and about fourteen were wounded. The police, after retiring from within the village, was again faced with another crowd near the volunteers' camp and again fired, with a view to disperse it. Here also two persons died instantaneously and about seven were injured.

## AT BHAGWANPUR

On 29 th Sept. about 5,000 people went to raid the Bhagwanpur Police station. It was well guarded with brabed wire fencing, having one gate. Fire was opened on the processionists. As a result 13 persons died on the spot and about 20 were injured. The Head Pandit of Bhimsowari M.E. School was shot at when he was giving

water to a wounded person. He fell into the pond and his dead body floated over the water the next day.

### AT BHAINTGARH

On the afternoon of 30th September the D.M. and the S.D.O., with an armed force forced the students, pleaders and passersby, including zamindars, to load a motor truck with bricks, and started for Marisda to repair the cut there. On their way they beat and forcibly took some persons in their truck. During the course of repair work it became dark and the newly built Marisda U.P. School house was set fire to by the District Magistrate to provide light for that work. The police having left the place the bricks were removed by the people from the cut in the night. Next day, a batch of soldiers went to the locality, set fire to 25 houses of innocent villagers in Marisda, mercilessly beat an old man, filled up the cut and then marched towards Bhaintgarh. There, at the Motor Station, they opened fire to disperse a mob, resulting in 2 deaths; one died instantaneously, and the other was still lying unconscious when one of the soldiers kicked him at the neck and killed him.

*Khar firing* :— In P.S. Pataspur on 3.10.42 the S.D.O., the S.P., the Circle Officer and a batch of military and armed constables went to the *thana*. On their way they were faced with a crowd of about 8 thousand persons at *khar*. The police opened fire to disperse the mob, resulting in one death.

*Teparapara Firing* :— On 8th Oct. a police and military party headed by the S.D.O. reached Teparapara and having found some people on the Teparapara 'bundh', they fired at them with tommy guns. One died and nine were wounded.

The above are only a few of the many cases in which firing was resorted to. It is not yet possible to give in detail the happenings at all the places.

Firing having failed to curb the nationalist spirit, bombing from air was resorted to. When the non-violent rebels took possession of Sutahatea, police Station, bombs were dropped on the huge gathering from two aeroplanes, but the brave people did not retire from the enemy's former stronghold.

### BURNING AND LOOTING OF HOUSES

In order to terrorise the people the district authorities adopted the most reprehensible policy of looting and burning

not only of the houses of Congress volunteers, but even of innocent villagers and educational institutions. One could never have imagined that even this Government could ever stoop to such cruelties in order to curb the spirit of Nationalism and independence in the politically conscious people of the district, fighting for the freedom of their own motherland. Dr. Shyama Prasad Mookerjee, who was then a minister, in his letter to the Governor of Bengal says, "Orders were issued from Calcutta that it was not the policy of the Government that houses should be burnt down by persons in charge of Law and Order. I have ample evidence to show that this order was not carried into effect, and even after the unprecedented havoc caused by the cyclone on the 16th October, and our visit to the affected areas a fortnight later, the burning of houses and looting were continued in some parts of the district."

Besides, the local authorities encouraged the Mohammedans to help the police in pointing out, looting, and setting fire to the houses of their Hindu neighbours; and it is known that the Mohammedans were bribed and coaxed by the Government to render this help. They were also assured of help by the Government in every possible way and it was given out to them that they would be exempted from all repressive measures. They were also directed to distinguish their houses by putting crescent flags on them.

### RAPE AND OTHER ATROCITIES ON WOMEN

In this District the measures for the so-called maintenance of law and order surpassed even the horrors of Dark Ages in their savagery. Agents of British Imperialism at times proclaimed by beat of drums in *hats*, bazars and public places that mass-scale raping of women would be resorted to if the fighters for freedom were not handed over to them and the fighting given up.

And this did not prove to be a vain threat. There was a large number of cases of criminal assault on women. On 9th Jan. 43, three villages, namely Masuria, Dihi-Masuria and Chandipur of P.S. Mahishadal, were surrounded by 6000 troops. Villagers, including women and children, were mercilessly beaten and houses burnt and looted. To crown all, 46 women were raped. Each of the women raped was subjected to this humiliation successively by two, three or even more persons, rendering them unconscious because of

bleeding. Most of the cases of rape were done in broad-day-light and in the presence of the officers. The case cited above is only an isolated example of numerous identical instances. All these facts have been proved in official enquiries but the whole matter has been suppressed. I have in my possession names and addresses of 72 such women with statements, a few of which are given below.

1. "I, Shreemati Sindhbala Maiti, wife of Adhar Chandra Maiti of village Chandipur, P.S. Mahishadal, Midnapur,.....I am aged 19 and I am the mother of one child. On 9th Jan., 43 at about 9-30 in the morning, Nalini Raha came to our house leading a band of troops. Some soldiers forcibly carried away my husband, and I was left alone in our home. Nalini Raha approached me and forcibly committed rape upon me. I became unconscious .....This is the second time when I was raped." (Previous to this occasion, this woman was raped on 27th October, 42. Only nine days after the second incident, this woman succumbed to the injuries sustained.)

2. "I, Shreemati Kshudi Pandit, wife of Haripada Pandit of Village Chandipur, P.S. Mahishdal.....I am aged 24 and I have got three sons. On the morning of 9th Jan. 43 Nalini Raha came to our house with a number of troops. Some soldiers seized my husband and carried him away. At the order of Nalini Raha, two soldiers caught hold of me and thrust cloth into my mouth. When I attempted to shout, I was threatened by the soldiers and Nalini Raha that they would shoot me if I shouted. Two persons committed rape on me successively, and I became unconscious.....When I regained consciousness, I found my husband in the room with bleeding wounds on his person .....Unless you redress the wrongs done to me, I will commit suicide."

(This woman was pregnant at the time of the assault.)

3. "I, Sreemati Suhashini Das, wife of Manmatha Nath Das of Village Chandipur. P. S. Mahishdal... I am 20 years of age. I am without any child. On 9th Jan. 43, some troops entered our home and threatened me with their guns. Two soldiers raped me and I became unconscious.....Out of a sense of shame and hatred, I could not speak to any body."

4. "I, Shreemati Raimani Paria, wife of Bhuban Paria of Village Masurya, P. S. Mahishdal.....I am aged 30. I am mother of one boy. On 9th Jan., 43 at about noon time,

Nalini Raha came to our house with a band of troops. Some of them carried away my husband forcibly. I got out through the back-door and was running away towards a bamboo bush when two soldiers caught me up and brought me by force to my house. They beat me with the butt-end of the guns and threw me on the ground. Then they tied a cloth round my face and raped me successively. Consequently, I became unconscious."

The number of raped women would have been much greater had not the male members come to their rescue, and in some cases the womenfolk themselves offered collective resistance. In some cases the victims saved their honour by showing daggers to the human brutes. Cases of outraging the modesty, of women, included incidents like biting of cheeks and breasts, taking away of clothes and making the ladies naked, brutally beating by *lathis*, pulling them by the hair, etc.

### COLLECTIVE FINES

The manner in which collective fines were imposed deserves severe condemnation. The scheme of imposition of collective fines on Hindus alone, irrespective of their guilt, reminds us of '*Jazia*' in the days of Aurangzeb.

Besides this the people were assaulted in various other ways. Instances of hurling young children at a distance, and of cows being burnt in the houses, have been reported. The leg of an infant was broken by treading under shoes. In some cases the people were made naked and a wooden roller pushed through the anus. In one case a lad was made naked and a mixture of lime and caustic soda was applied to the penis. These are a few of the many barbarities perpetrated upon the people by the agents of British Imperialism.

### SOME IMPORTANT INCIDENTS

#### *The Balurghat incident*

The sudden arrest of the Congress leaders on the 9th day of August 1942 at Bombay lashed up the minds of the Congress workers for a movement which would be a fitting reply thereto. But what would be its nature? The local Congress leaders waited eagerly for definite instructions, but instead of these came anonymous pamphlets.

From these and from the speeches delivered by the

All India Congress leaders on the eve of their arrest it was gathered that the Congress would start a people's movement and not merely a Congress movement. So in spite of the restrictions imposed upon him under Rule 56 (1b) of D. I. Rules (39) the first Satyagrahi of the local Congress, Sjt. Saroj Ranjan Chatterjee B. A., Secretary of the local Sub-divisional Congress Committee and a member of the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee, took upon himself the task of building up a peoples' movement. He had to expedite the matter as it was confidentially gathered that the arrest of 9 local Congress leaders was imminent.

The 14th of September was fixed as the date of the first incident of the Movement at this place by Sjt. Saroj Ranjan Chatterjee. Throughout the night of the 13th September more than one hundred batches of villagers under the leadership of their village Congress leaders, marched to Balurghat, some of them even coming from a distance of 30 miles, and assembled on the western bank of river Atrayi at Dangighat, three miles from the Balurghat town.

At dawn the assemblage was about five thousand strong. They crossed the river, and saluted the Congress Flag on the eastern side of the river, after which Sjt. Saroj Ranjan addressed the assembly. At about 7 A. M. the whole mass marched towards the town with shouts of 'Bande Mataram,' and "*Karengé ya Marengé*". During the march people from the villages on the eastern side of the river also joined these and their number rose to Seven thousand.

The procession entered the town at about 8 A. M. In the meantime printed pamphlets declaring a *hartal* had been extensively distributed. The procession marched across the town up to the treasury, where the leaders delivered short speeches, appealing to the treasury guards and other officials to resign from their services and to join the people's movement. Then they proceeded to raid the local government and semi-government offices scattered all over the town, which were (a) Sub-Registry office, (b) Post-office, (c) Civil Court Buildings, (d) Co-operative Bank (e) Out-agency office of B. & A. Railway (f) Jute Inspector's office (g) Ganja shops (h) Liquor shops (i) Agricultural demonstrator's office and godown (j) Assistant Jute Inspector's office, (k) Union Board office.

The Sub-Registry office was burnt to ashes. The local civil court buildings were also heavily burnt. Co-

operative bank buildings were also damaged through fire. Telegraphic wires were cut down, and telegraphic apparatus was dismantled. Office papers and furniture in the other offices were damaged.

Afterwards the whole procession returned from the town in an orderly manner at about 11.30 A. M. It was really very creditable that no act of personal violence or even slight damage to private property, was done.

### THE INCIDENT AT DANGIRGHAT

The processionists recrossed the river at Dangirghat safely. There were paddy stores of the Government for sending paddy outside the district, which was being very much resented by the local people. These were looted uptill the dusk when the district Magistrate with an armed force reached the spot, but for reasons best known to him, he went back without taking any steps whatsoever. Some of the people from the mob reached Simultali, a nearby place, and from here also a quantity of paddy was carried away.

### INCIDENT AT JAMALGACHI

The District Magistrate, however, on reaching the town back received information that Tappan *thana* office would be raided next day. So he left the town with an armed force on the 15th morning and reached Tapan within a few hours.

In the meantime a batch of some 300 villagers, consisting of Rajbansis, Santhals and Mohanmedans, marched towards Telghata to prevent the transport of paddy outside the district. During those days, as stated above, the village people in general all over the subdivision were very much resenting such export of paddy in the face of their own acute distress. Village Congress workers naturally took up their cause and gave them the lead they required.

On receiving information, the District Magistrate proceeded to the spot from Tapan with an armed force, along with Ejardar Mahadev Bhakat. On approaching Tapan the police party opened fire on the people who retired peacefully without suffering any injury. The District Magistrate arrested half a dozen of the sight-seers who were loitering about. The batch of people however, marched towards Madnagar and raided the shop

of the Ejardar in revenge for his conduct in escorting the D.M. to Telighata.

### INCIDENT AT MORADANGA

On 22nd Sep., 42 at dead of night a posse of police with guns, accompanied by *chowkidars* and *dafedars*, raided the house of Sjt. Phul Chand Mandal who was reported to have taken part, along with his party, in the Balurghat incident. The police party broke open the outer door of his house and entered. They also broke open the door of room in which Phul Chand was sleeping with his wife and his minor son, attacked him, and began to loot his belongings. At this Phul Chand Shouted for help. Forthwith the villagers ran to his house. The police fired at the villagers but some of them were soon caught hold of, and tied down with ropes; the rest fled away. Next morning, when the captives implored for their release a meeting of the villagers was called and the matter was placed before them for trial. It was resolved in the meeting that release might be granted on their signing the Congress pledge, and on their giving an assurance to resign from Government service. They signed the pledge then and there and the people accepted the assurances. They were then given refreshments and set free amidst shouts of *Bande mataram* and *Gandhi Ji ki Jai*.

### INCIDENT AT PARILAHAT

On 24th Sep., 42 the Inspector of police, and the Sub-Inspector of Police, at the head of an armed police force proceeded towards Moradanga in order to rescue the police party reported to have been captured by the people. On the way at Parilahat about two miles from Moradanga, they arrested two villagers who were coming back with medicine from Phul Chand Mandal's Dispensary at Moradanga. Their relations came to the Inspector of Police and entreated for the release of these innocent men. But the Inspector paid no heed to their request and threatened them instead. About a hundred villagers gathered at the bank of the tank. While discussions were going on the police opened fire on the gathering all of a sudden. With the reports of the guns the villagers ran to the spot from far and near. The number swelled to 500 or 600. Shouts demanding the release of the two innocent persons under arrest were raised. The Santhals attacked the police with their bows and arrows. Upon this the police party set those two persons free and made

good their escape towards Tapan, indiscriminately firing at the crowd. According to the police statements 66 ball cartridges and 10 buck shots were used by them. Three men, namely Adhar Mondal, Cankaru Darban and Etoa unson, were shot dead on the spot, and several injured.

It is to be noted that in all these, incidents confirmed Congress workers, both of the towns and the villages remained non-violent. At Poliala hat where the police provocation reached its climax. the village Congress leaders knelt down on the ground to receive the shots when the police opened fire. The conduct of Audhar Mondal of Maikuri, aged above 70, and the first to receive the shot, was really exemplary.

### REPRESSION

By the afternoon of the 14th September, the day of the Balurghat town incident, the District Magistrate with the D.S.P., I.B. staff, armed police and a batch of Gurkha force from Dinajpur Sadar arrived at Balurghat. At dead of night arrests commenced. In all 30 persons of the town, including 3 Mohammedans were arrested.

Early in the morning of the 17th September harassing searches were made at the houses of most of the Congress workers with the help of the military police. The District Magistrate and the S.P. themselves took up the task of supplementing the damage already inflicted with their own hands, where they thought it possible. All the moveables, including furniture, beds, utensils, cups, plates and boxes, almirahs and iron safes were broken to pieces. Then came forth batch after batch of armed forces of police from almost all the Districts of North Bengal and the Eastern Frontier Rifles from Dacca. Thus armed, the D.M. and the S. P. went into the interior of the sub-division.

The village of Moradanga was the main target of the District Magistrate and the S.P. The Eastern Frontier Rifles of Dacca, under the command of a European officer, were sent to Moradanga. They were also assisted by the armed police force. All the houses, numbering 42, were levelled to the ground, the male and femalefolks having taken shelter in the neighbouring jungles for fear of oppression.

After these demolitions the District Magistrate and the Superintendent held a meeting of the neighbouring Mohammedans and delivered speeches inciting them to

loot the moveables of the Moradanga people, and commit indiscriminate molestation of the women. Thanks to the European Commander, no molestation of womenfolk could be committed. But on the withdrawal of his force, one Neesharuddin Mandal of Shiranti P. S. Porsha was won over by the D. M. and the S. P. and he collected about 150 Mohammedans of the locality to co-operate in the desired repression. With the help of police officials and constables this party looted all the moveables; and carried away in carts for 6 days together such articles as paddy, rice, jute, furniture, utensils, beddings, salt, kerosene mustard oil, corrugated sheets from roofs and other valuables including ornaments and cash. While looting was going on, indiscriminate arrests were also being carried out.

A show of Mohommedans' strength was made on the 2nd October 1942. The S. D. O. with a revolver in hand and accompanied with armed guard was leading a big procession of Mohammedans armed with *lathis* and spears, etc., in violation of prohibitory orders already promulgated by the District Magistrate. Paddy stocks of most of the Hindus were looted by the processionists, the most important godown looted being that of Sjt. Tincowri Shaha which contained about 15,000 Mds. of paddy.

### COLLECTIVE FINES

Collective fine of Rs. 75,000/- was imposed upon the Hindus of a part of the Balurghat town, the solitary exception being one Mohammedan whose son was arrested in connection with the Balurghat incident. Be it noted that the actual damage done, if liberally estimated, could not be more than Rs. 15000 and from the list of assessment it is apparent that while the amount of damage was magnified, individuals were sought to be financially embarrassed with a set purpose, without any reasonable and lawful basis.

### NAMES OF PERSONS WHO DIED OF GUNSHOT

#### WOUNDS

1. Itwari Oraon of Mullickpur
2. Adhar Burman of Mailkuri
3. Kekaru Burman of Hatsaill
4. Chhota Burman of Malancha

## 2. CALCUTTA

Situated on the left bank of Hugli, the largest and westernmost branch of the Ganges delta, about 80 miles from the sea; Calcutta is the capital of Bengal. It was formerly the capital of the Indian Empire, and the residence of the Governor General. The Government buildings, Bishop's College (now an engineering school), the High Court, Town Hall, Banks, the Museum, the University, St. Paul's Cathedral, and many other buildings have earned for it the name of "city of palaces". But the Indian quarters, though improved lately are still squalid, with houses of mud or bamboo.

An esplanade, numerous quays, an excellent water-supply, electricity and tramway services add to its amenities. There are extensive dockyards, ironworks, timber yards, and jute mills. Extensive railway and steam-boat communications make it the chief emporium of commerce in Asia; ships of 5,000 tons enter the docks founded in 1686. It became the capital of India in 1772. The population is two-thirds Hindus, less than a third Mohammedan, and  $4\frac{1}{2}$  per cent Christians, and totals 1,197,000 persons, (including Howrah, 1,485,000).

### FACTS ABOUT THE MOVEMENT

There were *hartals* in the city of Calcutta on 10th, 13th, 14th, and 17th August. There were meetings and processions joined by large crowds of people. There were *lathi* charges on 13th, 14th, 15th, 16th, and 25th August. Tear-gas charges on the 13th, and firing on 13th, 14th and 16th. According to Government figures the number of fatal casualties was 39 and that of the wounded 157. This is a gross and deliberate under-statement. The number of deaths was in the neighbourhood of 150. According to an American correspondent's cable to America, more than 100 persons died as a result of firing on the 14th alone. The news was suppressed.

### STUDENTS

The students of Calcutta played a splendid part in the demonstrative and other activities. They boycotted schools and colleges from 10th to 15th; thereafter the authorities thought it fit to close the institutions upto 8th September. The students became active after the reopening of the colleges, and these were again closed for Pooja vacations.

There was a great deal of dislocation of communi-

cations during those days. Telephone and electric wires were cut at various places. Many tramcars were burnt or damaged. Roads were barricaded, electric boxes damaged, firealarm boxes broken, posts looted, letter-boxes damaged, several police and military lorries burnt or damaged. 13 jute presses of Kashipur observed *hartal*. Car-drivers suspended work on August 10. Annapurna Metal Works and Dumdum Aluminium Works struck work for some days.

### REPRESSION

The Bengal P.C.C. was declared illegal. Records of the Bengal Civil Protection Committee were seized. Windows of the Congress Civil Defence Board Office were broken. 3 flat machines of the Shakti press were damaged, types scattered, water pipes disconnected and the press sealed. Many shops and some markets were looted by the police. In addition to regular firing, lathi charges and tear-gas attacks, there was a lot of random shooting. Among victims of this random shooting were a shop-keeper, and a 7 year old boy who was loitering in the corridor of his house. A large number of people, including a press correspondent and a 65 year old man, were compelled to remove garbage at the point of the bayonet.

*October to December:—Arrests:—*158, including 20 ladies. Free India Day was observed on 9th Dec., 42. There was *hartal*, and a procession was taken out which was dispersed by the police. On the 10th October Khadi shops of the All India Spinners Association, and also a store of the All India Village Industries Association, were taken possession of by the police and sealed.

### DISLOCATION

On the 16th October the revolutionaries set fire to a tramcar at the junction of Wellington Street and Dharamtoolla street. On 8th Dec., 42 incendiaries were thrown on 3 tramcars at Nimtolla. On 9th Dec., 42 tramcars were intercepted in Ballygunge area and Garishtta. 4 persons snatched away the key from the driver of a tram-car at Sealdah, and got down after giving it a start, whereupon it collided with another stationary car near College street. One tram car was burnt down at Gariahatta. On 5th Oct., 42, A first-class carriage of a local train from Sealdah to Goalundo was gutted.

On 5th Dec., 42, 19 persons gutted the Buskuria Station ( B. & A. R. ). Some bombs exploded. All the records of the station were burnt down. On 30th Oct., a bomb was thrown at an excise shop in Bow bazar. On 21st Dec., 42, bombs were thrown at the Foreign liquor shops in Bhowanipur. The same day some bombs exploded in the Stock Exchange.

### 3. MURSHIDABAD

Arrests

...

58

Telegraph wires were cut between Beldanga and Najinagar. Ajimganj city Railway station was attacked and damaged. On 29th August Beldanga station was similarly treated. On the 20th August Saktipur and Rampara, Patikabari and Rukanpura post-offices were burnt. At Patikabari the telegraph office was gutted and a *Ganja* shop was destroyed.

Booking office of Nasirpur station was gutted on 2nd Oct., 42. On 27th Oct., 42 a second class compartment of a train running from Cossimbazar and Barhanpore was set on fire. On 24.10. 42. Barhanpore Silk Techno was burnt. 28th Oct., 42 saw the Jengipur Municipal House gutted. Some letter-boxes of Rajganj and Saidabad were set fire to on 6th Nov., 42.

Repression:- On 25th September the movable property of a Congress worker of Gankar was attached. On the 9th September about 60 processionists were arrested at Hereshempore, taken to the jungles and let off. The inmates of a house, including ladies, were severely assaulted in Barhanpore.

A collective fine of Rs. 5,000 was imposed at Boldanga.

### 4. NADIA DISTRICT

Arrests.

...

98

On the 17th August telegraph and telephone wires were cut at Ramaghat. Telegraph wires were cut at Kushtea and Plassy. On the 29th August lamps at Krishnagar Rly. station were damaged, and the points tampered with. On the 20th Sept. 4 1st. and 2nd class bogies of Krishnagar local train were burnt. 26th Sept. witnessed the burning of a first class bogie of the same train. On 15th Dec., 42 Murgacha Railway station was

attacked and the building was gutted, with all the records in it. On 12th Dec., 42 sheds of Ramaghat evacuation Relief Centre were burnt down.

On the 25th. August a procession at Krishnagar, and on the 28th August a meeting at Krishanagar, were *lathi*-charged. Several persons were seriously injured.

7 Commissioners of Nabadwip Municipality resigned.

### 5. DACCA DISTRICT

There were *hartals* for a number of days in the town of Dacca and other places in the district. There were several meetings and processions. The students left their schools.

Labour *hartals* occurred in Dhakeswari, Chittaranjan and Luxminarayan Cotton Mills on 13th and 17th August. From 13th September Dhakeswari, Chittaranjan and Luxminarayan cotton mills went on strike. A Labour rally was held at Narayanganj on the 17th August. There was picketting of Narayanganj Civil and Criminal Courts. On 11th Oct., 42 the Dacca Centre of the A.I.S.A. as also of Raipur was sealed by the police.

On the 13th August, Dacca streets were barricaded. On the 15th, a train was detained at Dayaganj, and Rly. property was damaged. Rails were removed from Dacca Narayanganj line, the traffic between the two towns was cut off for days together. On the 15th August Candaria Rly. Station was raided and records burnt. The road to the station was barricaded.

On the 13th, 14th, 15th, 17th and 23rd August Telegraph wires were cut at Dacca, and on 17th Dacca Telephone switch-board was set on fire. A phone switch-board in Armanitola was burnt on the 30 th. Registration numbers of cycles were removed. On the 16th August at Munshiganj Telegraph wire was cut. On the 17th September wires were cut at Outpara, and on the 22nd at Kanaingson. On the 13th August hay stocked for military purposes was gutted at Dacca. On the 15th August a motor car was thrown in the Dolai Canal, and the Army and Navy Stores at Narayanganj were damaged. On the 17th August an A.R.P. post was destroyed at Dacca, where on the 13th August the Munsiff's Court was raided and records burnt. On the 8th September hay-stock for the military was burnt, and the Looms and Yarn of Government Weaving Institute were damaged.

The following bomb-outrages also occurred—  
5.10.42 Bombs were thrown at the C.I.D. Inspector's  
Quarters.

A number of firing incidents also took place:-

13th August:	at Sakharibazar:	1 killed several injured (Two constables wounded before the Munsiff's court)
15th August:	at Sadarghat	1 killed 7 wounded (of which 3 subsequently died)
15th september:	at Taltola	3 killed 1 wounded
22nd september:	at Nawabganj:	2 killed 9 wounded (one constable killed and another subsequently died)

Number of arrests was 170 including 19 ladies. The Municipality was superseded. 2 A.R.P. Posts at Chandpur were gutted. On the 24th August Comile Income-Tax Office was raided and the records destroyed. The Records of Ebrahimpur Debt Settlement Board, and of Narsinghpur Post-Office were also burnt. On the 10th September Ebrahimpur Union Board records, and on the

14th September Burichanga Post-Office were burnt. The same was the fate of the records of Rajapur Post-Office. Telegraph wires were cut at Pagmars between Lakshmi and Lamai. Other Post-Offices gutted were Kalitala, and Durgapur. A Barkanta letter-box of Kheora P. O. was removed. The Durgapur U.P. Office was gutted on 1st Oct. 42. On the 14th November two military sheds of Nilakhi aerodrome in P.S. Chandagram were gutted.

Collective fines imposed on the locality amounted to Rs. 600.

### 7—SYLHET

From the 25th August to 15th September 697 pleaders and *Mukhtars* gave up their practice. 2000 *Muharrars* followed suit. On the 31st August Sylhet Post-Office the Income-Tax Office and Executive Engineer's Office were attacked and their records burnt. The same fate overtook the records of Summanganj Court on the 18th September. Fire was set to Kulaura *thana* on the 1st October and to Biswanath *thana*, with the quarters of the two S.I.'s, on the 8th October. The Beanibazar Post-Office was burnt down on 26th Nov. 42, as also were many letter boxes in different parts of the district. Telegraph wires were cut and posts pulled down in about 20 places. One wagon full of petrol, and another of rations for the military, were burnt down on Silehar Railway platform. One white soldier on duty was also burnt along with these.

As a consequence of the removal of the Railway line 9 bogies were derailed. On the 22nd November fire was set to a stack of straw stocked for military purposes; on the 20th November a bamboo bridge was gutted.

20,000 leaflets and a good number of "Quit India" posters were distributed throughout the district. One hundred *Maulvies* were engaged in propaganda amongst the Mohammedans, preaching Hindu-Muslim Unity and India's Independence. The Sylhet *Jamiat-ul-Ulema* was taking active part in the campaign. 60 *Swaraj Panchayats* were formed. Disputes and suits were being tried and settled by these *Panchayats*.

### 8—FARIDPUR

All along from Karia to Palang, and from there to Budrangar, telegraph wires were cut. On the 28th Septem-

ber Basentapur Railway station was gutted. Radaganj attestation office was raided on the 7th September; on 22nd September Bijapur attestation office was raided and the records destroyed. At Bhanga, the *thana* officials incited the Muslims of the adjoining villages against the Congress volunteers and had some houses looted by them. Telegraph wires were cut at 2 places on 2nd Nov., 42. Near Bowlitala of Gopalganj on 5th Nov. 42 Dadai Railway station was set fire to and partly burnt. Telegraph wires were cut at Kanthachari and Utter Palang and Naira on 17th Nov., 42 and fire was set to the office of the Headmaster Zilla School, Faridpur. Records of the Settlement office were snatched away.

### 9—MYMENSINGH

*Arrests*

...

141

On the 23rd August wires were cut at Mymensingh Telegraph. On the 29th, rails were removed and sleepers burnt at Nilganj. On the 1st and 9th September telegraph wires were cut at Netrakone Railway Station. At Kishoreganj also telegraph wires were cut and the Nilganj post-office mail bag was taken possession of. On the 31st August an Excise Shop was raided. On the 18th August hay stack godown at Mymensingh was burnt. On the 31st August Sales Tax and Income Tax Offices were raided. The Tengail Civil Court and the S.I.'s quarter were set fire to on the 7th and 8th Oct. respectively. On 1st Oct., 42 a big *hat* at Royerbazar was attacked and looted by the people; on the 2nd October 1942 the Atherbari hat was looted. 8 Commissioners of Mymensingh Municipality resigned and some lawyers gave up their practice, in pursuance of the struggle.

### SHOOTING

On the occasion of Rayerbazar *hat* raid there were 3 deaths and many injuries as a result of the police firing. After the loot of Atherabari *hat*, armed forces arrived at the spot, and indiscriminate shooting followed, in which 100 persons received injuries.

### 10—RAJASHAHI

On the 6th September Nowgong Post-Office was raided and records and furniture were destroyed. On the 10th September Boalia *Thana* was raided, and slightly damaged. This was again raided on

the 13th Septe Eber and a rice godown was set fire to. On the 5th October 1942 Abadapur *hat* and on 12th Oct. 42 Kajali *hat* were looted and a raid was also made on Kasimbari.

On the 9th September, 7 Commissioners of Rajashahi Municipality resigned.

### 11—DINAPUR

On the 14th September, Balurghat Telegraph wires were cut. Also the Union Board was raided, its records burnt, and two buildings of Civil court set fire to, burning all records, several excise shops were raided and their records burnt; the sub-registry office and Central Co-operative Bank were set fire to and their records burnt.

A local sub-Registrar was fined Rs. 1000 and an Honorary Magistrate Rs. 200.

*Note*:—A separate account of the happenings in Dinapur is given elsewhere.

### 12—RANGPUR

*Arrests*

...

32

On the 15th August Parbatipur-Kathihar Railway line was tampered with by removing rails, as a result of which one train was derailed. On the 29th August  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile of rails were removed at Parbatipur, sleepers burnt and station raided. On the 1st September Rangia station building and quarters of railway employees were gutted—all railway properties were destroyed, and two pairs of rails removed. On the same day  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile of rails were removed at Bhaihate and fishplates were also removed. On the 23rd September telegraph wires from Serupur to Chandaikona were cut, as also from Dhupchanci to Serpur. One 1st class and one 2nd class bogie were gutted at Bholpurpare Railway station.

### 13—JALPAIGURI

On 25th September Kumargramduar post office and Tehsil office were raided. As a result the gun licenses of the *Marwaries* were cancelled.

### 14—DARJEELING

*Arrests*

...

46

Firing was resorted to on 8th September at Siliguri.

## 15—BURDWAN

Arrests

...

174

On the 13th September Kalans Railway station was gutted. On the 19th September Jamalurgang Railway Station records and furniture were burnt. On the 19th Sept. Jamalpur country liquor and *ganja* shops were gutted. On the 20th September Bamuni's country liquor and excise shops were destroyed. On the 13th September Kalana Civil Court Records and furniture were destroyed. On the 26th Sept. 2 houses of Begrai Evacuation Camp and the Burdwan Dak Bungalow were gutted. On the 19th September, Jamalpur Thana records and furniture were burnt. One gun was seized in this town on the 19th Sept. On the 7th October, 7 evacuation sheds at Sagri were gutted. On 21st Oct., 42 Kusumgram Dak Bungalow was burnt down. On 4th Dec., 42 Bankepur D.S. Office was set fire to and on 11th Dec., 42- Ukrid D.S.B. Office was gutted. On the 25th November 1942 Berugram Post-Office was burnt down; and on November 29, 1942 Bankpuri U.B. Office was gutted. On 11th Dec., 42 Urid U.B. Office met the same fate. Maldanagar and Setpur excise shops were burnt. On 26th Nov., 42 Kanepur country liquor shop was gutted.

## SHOOTING

On 9th Oct., 1942 a man while going to receive Agricultural loan was shot down by a British Tommy near Guskura Railway Station, the man dying instantaneously.

Collective fines

Rs. 45,500 were imposed.

## 16—HOWRAH

Arrests

...

48

On the 18th August Bantra telephone and electric wires were cut, the Howrah-Bandsghat tram was stopped. On 17th September Bemugachi Belgatchia Railway and Government telegraph wires were cut at various places. On the 19th August Tram trollies were destroyed at Colbari. On the 15th September, Panchantale road was barricaded. On the previous day the Trust Road Post-office records and stamps had been burnt. On the 17th Sept. Shanpur post-office records and stamps met the same fate; Jhingra post office was also gutted. Fish plates were removed on B. N. Railway lines near Bausagar on 8th Dec., 42. Attempt was made to remove lines on B. D. Rly. at

Brindabanpur, Kenjakura U.B. Office. Manohar U. B. office was gutted and the records of Rathanabad U. B. Office were burnt. Belistore Dak Bungalow was partly burnt. Belistore Dak Bungalow was partly burnt on 8th Oct., 42, as also the Military Observation Camp at Chandra and Aluni, which were completely burnt down, Air observatories at Kenchka and Susunia were also gutted. 2 sheds of Bishanpur aerodrome were set fire to. On 8th Oct., 42 excise shops at Sonamukhi, Chandra, and Gangajalhati, were gutted; on 10th Oct., 42 the same thing happened at Selboni, Ledamghati and Kanohanpur. At Dobipur, totalchiti Jorda, Bidno, Karrasal, Selumpur. Biberda, Pamunia and, sapra excise shops were gutted. Benunia post office was burnt On 1st Oct., 42 mail bags of Akui were snatched away.

On 21st August, an assembly at Uluberia was fired upon.

### LABOUR STRIKE

Labour strikes began on the 17th August at Howrah Jute Mill, Anantram Chatterjee & Co., Fakirdas Mistri & Co., Aswani Mandal & Co., K. Das & Co., Bhutanath Panchal & Co., Bellavadas Mantra & Co., and Bijoy Burn and Co. and from 19th September at Turner, Morrison Co., Bantra.

Union Board at Betur and Badalnarayanpur: were superseded

### 17-HOOGHLY

*Arrests*

...

565

### DISLOCATION

At Khanakul, Arambagh, Ghatal, Kanyashi Simlegarh, Group Jougram, Eishram-Konnagar, Sheoraphuli-Baidyavati and Champadanga-Antpur, Telegraph wires were cut, as also at Bandal Tirishhighs, Khayasi Simlegher and Sheorsphali-Baiyabati. Rails were removed between Champadanga and Somda, and Hewakhana and Anantpur (twice) on Martin Co. Rly. as a result of which the running of trains was stopped for five hours on two days. Fishplates on the E. I. R. line were removed at some places. Lights, glasspanes and seats of trains were damaged. 2 compartments were set fire to, lamps at some stations were broken to pieces, and rails were removed at Jamalpur and Dashghars. Three

bridges of Bainohee-Katwa road were breached. On the 6th Sept. Arambagh Khasmahel office records were burnt. Bali Khasmahel office, in which the records of all the Khasmahels of the district were kept, was set fire to which resulted in all records being gutted. Export of food-stuffs for the soldiers from the Sheoraphuli *hat* was stopped. Evacuation camps at Chandital and Bhanderihati were gutted. Military observation post at kuley was destroyed. On the 17th October evacuation sheds were burnt down in Kamarpurkari. On the 28th October 1942 furniture of Badanganj excise shops, goods and furniture of Krishnagar (Khanagul), Gouhati (Arabmagh) and parsrampur, excise shops were burnt down. On 17th October, 42 the Dak-Bungalow of Kamarpukar and Ahandpur with all their furniture, stable and cooking shed were completely gutted. Furniture of Nayapur Dak Bungalow was also burnt down. On 4th Oct. 42 records of Devakhanda P.O. were burnt. On 1st Dec., 42 Patul Post-office was gutted. The records of Dhaniakhati Post-Office were burnt down. Telegraph lines were damaged sixteen times. Mail bags were destroyed near Mahisgoth (27.10.42) Mayapur (28.10.42) and Gourhati area (28. 10. 42). Five bags were destroyed near Talabandhi (31. 10. 42) near Baldiha, two bags between Badanganj and Dovkhanea (31. 10. 42) between Hebugutni and Khan skul (1. 10. 42), and Sandhipurdanga (10. 10. 42). Beinchi U.B. records were destroyed on (17. 10. 42) and the U.B. Office was gutted on (5. 11. 42).

Nakunda, Sheers, Bali, Shelpur, Bhadur, Kishorpur, Natibpur, Purshurs, Kumrsha, Jagatpur Rajhati, Harinkols, Madhopur, Shambazar Paschimpara, Caoshpur, Bhandar-hati and Arambagh Union Boards records were burnt.

Rajahat Bandar, Nattibpur, Bakunda, Helan Datul Shyampur, kandanpur, Alati, Halaypur, Battannel, Ghar-goil, Gourhati, Arnsti, Langulpore, kamarpukar, Shyambazar, Dharasphuli and Dwarkats Post-Offices were damaged and records burnt or destroyed.

### REOCCUPATION

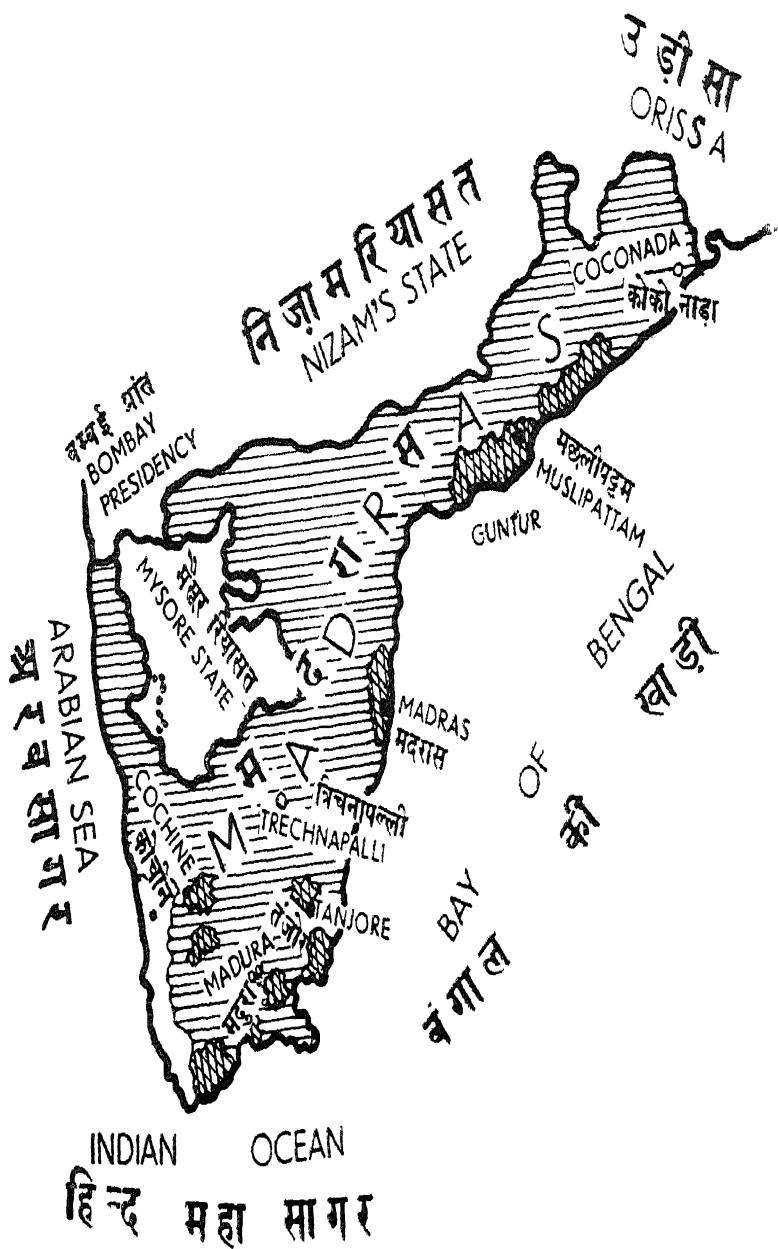
Hooghly D. C. office at Serampore, and the house of a prominent Congress worker, which were sealed by the Government, were re-occupied by the people. On 7.10.42 the Arambagh Police locked the Sagar kutir (Congress Camp) of Boro-Dongal. The processionists broke open the lock on 8th Oct., 42, and took possession of their National Institution. One lorry load of rice was seized by the people at Bainches-katwa Road.

40 House-holders of Nayanpur were maltreated and 35 mercilessly beaten by the police.

*Resignations:* - On 17th August, 8 commissioners of Bali Municipality, 10 Commissioners of Serampore Municipality, 1 commissioner of Baidyabati Municipality, 8 commissioners of Hooghly Chinesurrah Municipality, and 2 commissioners of Baneshberis Municipality tendered resignations. 61 Union Board members also lay down their offices. 2 members of the Walsh Hospital resigned.

*Firing:* - On 30.10.42 the Champadanga *hat* was raided by the people. Home articles were removed, and some destroyed. On receipt of information the police arrived and opened fire, with the result that one Haripad Paul of Sodepur, and another, Pairatungi, lost their lives; several others were seriously wounded.





## CHAPTER VIII

### MADRAS PRESIDENCY

#### THE PROVINCE AND PEOPLE OF MADRAS PRESIDENCY

The Madras Presidency occupies the whole of the southern portion of the Peninsula and excluding the Indian States, has an area of 125,363, sq. miles. It has, on the east, on the Bay of Bengal, coast-line of about 1,250 miles; in the south, on the Arabian Sea, a coast-line of about 150 miles.

The density of population of the Presidency is always increasing. Hindus account for 88% of the Madras population; Mohammedans 7% and the Christians 3.8%. The actual number of other communities is inconsiderable. The vast majority of the populations is of the Dravidian stock, and the principal Dravidian languages, Telugu, & Tamil, are spoken by 18 million and 19 million persons respectively. 40% of the population talk Tamil, 37.5% Telugu, 7.9% Malayalam. Oriyas, Kanari, Hindustani, Tulu follow in that order, with a percentage of above 1. In this way Madras is not only a multi-linguistic Presidency but also a multi-racial one. Due to these reasons the social and economic problems of the Presidency have become multifarious and are complex in nature. In the Madras Presidency two distinct cultures have come together and have been coalesced into one culture. The Dravidian culture has come much nearer the Aryan culture but has retained the embellishments, naturalism, and the deities of the Dravidian culture. We can say without doubt and reservation, that Madras has today assumed the cultural leadership of India.

The principal occupation of the province is agriculture engaging about 68% of the population. The principal food crops are rice, cholam, ragi and kambu. Industrial crops are cotton, sugarcane and groundnut. Agricultural training is making rapid progress in the Presidency.

## THE PSYCHOLOGY AND TEMPERAMENT OF THE PEOPLE

Madraseses have always been with the authorities. But for the Mopla rebellion in Malabar, Madras has never given any lead in the battles of freedom. Without any prejudice against the Madraseses, and with due regard to historical facts, it must be admitted that the Madraseses have always been behind the screen and have trimmed the British Empire. What the Gurkha is to the British army the Madraseses are to the civil Army of Occupation, also called the Government.

Even when mere stenographers, they can give the lead, for others to copy and act. In a sense they are the citizens of the world. They have the least provincial anti-pathies or suspicious tendencies. This has mainly been responsible for the fact that they are scattered all over the world, and already hold a very high and respectable position in the estimate of the foreign nation. They feel at home everywhere and anywhere on earth. They very soon acclimatize themselves to new environments. This has made the Madrasi character a very adaptable one. With them separation and disintegration is the rule harmony and unity an exception. They are extremely individualistic. No two of them will look the same way even for a while, on any problem. They are divided almost into as many factions as there are families. You can kick, thrash and lunge a Madrasee, and a brother Madrasee will not come to his rescue, will not raise a finger. That simple aloofness and savage jealousy is very characteristic of the Madraseses. Whether for exploitation or national service, they are capable of sustained enthusiasm. Their main source of strength, intellectual power untouched by emotion is also their weakness. They have relied too much on intellect, and have too long starved their other faculties.

These things have been mainly responsible for the political chaos that we find today in the Madras Presidency. That is also the reason why the province so completely flouted the expressed wishes of the Congress High Command, when it demanded that Shri Rajgopalachari be made Premier. So individualistic and so strong in their convictions are the Madraseses that they are even now expressing themselves strongly against Sri T. Prakasham Kavendra.

To some these characteristic features of the Madraseses

may be their vices, but I think they are virtuous, insomuch that the Madrasee has a strong will and courage to fight for his convictions. Whenever a national battle was started the Madrasees played a significant role. They have given many headaches, and many jerks, even to the British Empire. Though a Madrasee may not actually prefer a cold-blooded murder, still his intellect moves in such a way that to the opponent he will do more harm and more damage than by death itself.

## THE MOVEMENT

Madras was stirred, shocked and trembled with anger when it received the news of the arrest of the Congress leaders. All of a sudden the whole atmosphere of the province was surcharged with feelings of revenge. The Congress radio and the literature produced and distributed by the underground workers made a call on Madras to plunge in sabotage and dislocation activities; but the Madrasees have steadiness. It is not always easy to appeal to their emotions. They remained loyal to Mahatma Gandhi, and devoted to his cult of non-violence. Madrasees are not cowardly race, and did not submit to the tyrant, but they opposed the British, by expressing their indignation through non-cooperation with the enemy.

*Hartals* were organized and processions taken out, in which a very large number of the people participated. At many places the youth, incited by the people belonging to other provinces, took to loot, arson, sabotage and dislocation activities.

## REPRESSION

As elsewhere, the story of the repressive measures adopted by the Bureaucracy in Madras Presidency is heart-rending. At Ramanadh and Deokota, inhuman atrocities were perpetrated on the people. The Malabar police force proved to be a very harmful one in its cruelties in suppressing the insurgents. Throughout the Presidency, it was the members of this police force that were despatched to quell the movement.

## THE MAGISTRACY

Most of the independent minded judges had to say

very strong words against the police authorities. Free use of Rules 56 and 35, Defence of India Rules, was made by the District Magistrates and police authorities: The judges strongly condemned those measures, and the repression indulged in by the Bureaucracy.

Mr. W. O. Newsam, District and Sessions Judge, Chittoor said, "The object of rule 56 is to secure the defence of India, the public safety, the maintenance of public order and the efficient prosecution of the War. An order made under this rule must necessarily apply to all the persons within a specified area without distinction of race or creed or party. It is unlawful to discriminate between persons, to allow public processions or public meetings by persons of a particular way of thinking and to prohibit public meetings by persons of a different way of thinking." The Judge, therefore, held that the order of the District Magistrate, Chittoor was *ultra vires*. Many acquittals were made by High Court Judges of the persons wrongfully arrested by the local authorities.

Holding that only persons in actual control or occupation of the premises were liable under rule 30 of the Defence of India Rules for any prejudicial report found in a house, and that such proof was lacking in this case, Mr. P. Rajagopalan, I. C. S., District Judge, Madura acquitted on March 13, 1943, K. S. Sankaran, who had been sentenced by the City Magistrate, Madura to 8 months' R. I..

Such cases can be multiplied, showing that the Bureaucracy was making a callous and reckless use of the powers vested in them during those great days of 1942. But the people were not un-nerved in the least. They suffered, they were robbed, they were humiliated, they were tortured, their women were molested, but they continued with the Freedom's battle for many months.

### 1-ANDHRA DESH

No. of Detenus	...	130
No. of convicted prisoners	...	1,700
No. of places where firing was resorted to	...	3
No. of persons dead	...	21

No. of persons sentenced to whipping...	137
Total amount of collective fines collected. ...	over 8 lakhs
No. of places where cutting of wires was resorted to ...	1,500
No. of railway stations burnt ...	18
No. of places where rails were removed ...	7
Rest houses, police records, post offices etc. burnt ...	10 places

### THE BACKGROUND

The Andhras, by nature, tradition, culture and literature, are independent, patriotic and freedom loving. Their emotional and free spirit, and their willingness to make sacrifices for the country, come into full play when action begins. The *ryotwari* tenancy of Madras and the fertile lands of the Godavari and the Krishna instil into the minds of the peasants a love of the soil and an ardent patriotism.

Secondly, the Congress leaders of Andhra, though not of national fame, are a good team of organisers. That is why Andhra is with the Congress and the Mahatma at every critical time.

Thirdly, Andhra is the area which realized the effects and the weakness of the hold that British power had over India. Early in April 1942, Cocanada and Vizagapatam were subjected to bombing for the first time by the Japanese. The Government officials, A.R.P. workers, and the titled gentry of Rao Bahadurs, were the first to run for safety, leaving the towns hurriedly. Civil Government broke down, and the British Power looked like crumbling to the dust. People realised that only a National Government could organise and protect them from the enemy. That is why the August Revolution was very popular in Andhra, which felt that it could no longer be protected by the bureaucracy.

Similar to the Hallett regime in the U.P., in Madras there was the Rutherford clique at that time, which believed in strong action and fighting the war on two fronts; one the enemy and two, the Indian people demanding freedom. Repression and police *raj* were the order of the day in Madras also, though, due to the transfer of Sir Thomas

Rutherford to Bihar, Madras did not attain the notoriety of the U.P. Repression naturally invited mass action. The Andhra people-peasants, workers, intellectuals, women almost every section, fully responded to the call and acted whole-heartedly. Andhra, therefore, became one of the storm centres of political action in the memorable days following the August Revolution of 1942.

Andhra has no popular idols of the Jawaharlal type. It does not possess any strong and iron-willed Sardars. It has not given any astute and clever intellectuals of the C.R. brand. It has no Parliamentarians and negotiators of the Pant and Bhulabhai calibre. It has no simple saints like Shanker Rao Deo. It has not sent any stalwarts into the High Command of the Congress, where a seat will pay good dividends. It has no permanent sitting members in the Congress Cabinet, except Dr. Pattabhi who speaks only on occasion and when definitely invited. But, as said above, the Congress Executive of Andhra Province is a pretty good working team, possessing wonderful organising talents, each member contributing his own to enrich the pool. Prof. Ranga's Summer School of Politics at Nidubrolu, in Guntur district, sends out every year at least two hundred revolutionary youths for the Indian freedom battle. His hold on the Andhra peasants is unquestioned, and a call from him is enough to mobilize the agriculturists for the Congress cause. Naturally, on the arrest of the leaders at Bombay the bureaucracy was faced with a terrible situation in Andhra.

### THE DIFFERENT STAGES

In the face of the greatest provocation, and the leonine violence displayed by the Government and their agents, the movement, when once on, took various forms and adopted the best means suited to the time, devised by groups of free peoples. None could exercise any control: neither was any leader left outside to check or alter the tide of open revolt, for in Andhra, as elsewhere it was a real peoples' war. The communists' false cry, C.R.'s pet talks at Madras, and the hypocritical eloquence of the National War Front sank low and went unheard in the hustle of revolutionary action. For days on end, nay, for months together, popular uprisings brought His Majesty's Government at an end in many places in Andhra. Not all the D.I.R. paraphernalia could rescue

the crumbling regime from its inevitable doom brought about by the revolt of the Indian peoples.

## THE MOVEMENT

Andhra caught the echoes of Bombay's uprisings against the British *Raj* through the Western Ghats. For freedom loving, independent and patriotic elements in Andhra, it was no longer a moment for hesitation, debate or discussion about methods. It was a time for action, and the last onslaught against the tottering British Empire in India was to be now delivered. The fight for the liberation of the Indian people was already begun. In the decisive battle against oppressive alien rule, the Andhras played a glorious, valiant and worthy part in keeping with the traditions, culture and independent spirit of the people of Andhra Desa.

Only a day before his arrest, Sardar Vallabhai Patel publicly told the A.-I.C.C. that a decisive 'fight to the finish' was to be launched and it should be quick and short like a '*Blitzkrieg*'. The Mahatma's final appeal of "Do or Die" went straight home to every patriot, the masses in Andhra considered themselves free, and acted with the nerve and initiative born of recent deliverance from the bondage and oppression of an alien tyranny. This is the keynote and prominent feature of the course of Revolution in Andhra.

People revolted in Andhra *en masse* and the British power stood eclipsed for a number of days. Huge processions, meetings and demonstrations formed the first item in the history of the revolution, and when the masses became leaderless in some parts they returned violence with violence. That was the time when Mr. Churchill was encouraging through the B.B.C., sabotage of enemy war efforts in Europe. Indian people just turned into B.B.C. and did what was preached by First Minister of the Crown. The M.S.M. Railway line was broken at many places to hinder war effort. Anti-recruitment campaigns, no-tax movement, constructive programme of the Congress, non-co-operation with war effort, disobedience of foreign rules and defying the different bans were the main planks of the revolution.

The various forms through which mass anger was demonstrated was cutting Telegraphic and Telephone wires, burning of Railway stations, defiance of bans on

public meetings, removal of rails, burning of Rest-Houses, Post-Offices and a few sheds in some schools.

### OPEN MOVEMENT

After three months, this type of activity calmed down. During the year 1943 the movement took the form of picketing, defiance of bans, etc. In a number of cases the removal of rails was done openly and not covertly. One solace is that not a single person, be he an officer of the Government or a public citizen, was violently handled.

### A "REIGN OF TERROR"

At Cocanada, Rajahmundry, Bhimavaram, and other towns, Police *Raj* prevailed for a number of days. Arrests and suppression of free activity was indulged in by the Government. The people revolted and the civil administration broke down at many places. At Bezwada and other places, the military was summoned to restore order and to guard the railway lines. Attacks by enraged masses on Government places were, of course, inevitable as the violent action of the authorities was to be duly met with. Special courts under the Ordinance regime came into being. Bhimavaram in West Godavari was the Chimur of Andhra Desa. Several people were prosecuted under Ordinances and sentenced to death. At Bhimavaram as many as 70 people were prosecuted on charges of mob violence and 16 sentenced to death. At Guntur, Vizag, Tenali and other places also a similar 'Reign of Terror' obtained for a number of days, to cow the people's spirit of resistance. There were several heroes who paid with their lives, and many more who lost property and health by prolonged detention in Jail. Mr. D. Naranraju, of Ellore, was nearly broken in health and was released only when the Government assured themselves of his sure death in a day or two. The worst happened and he died within a week of his release. Shootings and imposition of collective fines was resorted to by the Government in the most indiscriminate manner, 21 persons were killed as a result of police firing, 137 were given whipping sentences and the number of stripes varied from 4 to 46.

The total amount of collective fines realized came to over 9 lakhs of rupees.

## A RECORD THAT SPEAKS FOR ITSELF.

### 1. RAILWAY STATIONS BURNT

Tenali, Duggirala, Chilumuru, Chirala, Nidubrole, Vendra, Satyavada, Relangi, Attili Doderu, Palacol, Sivaraopeta, Undi, Akidu, Dedulury, Sppalur, Sangam-jagerlamudi, Ongole and other places.

### 2. REMOVAL OF RAILS

Dosapadu, Nujella, Gudivada, Nidub, around Guntakal, near Chittoor and near Kalahasti. There was no loss of life due to removal of rails.

Train services were stopped between Madras and Bezwada for a week and between Narsapur and Nidadavol for over ten days. The railway lines between Akidu and Bhimavaram were removed openly for over a mile.

### 3. CUTTING OF WIRES

This was resorted to at about 1,500 places in all the districts. At Ellore the notice of cutting was given beforehand and the volunteers did it in an open meeting.

### 4. BUILDINGS BURNT

Rest houses, police records and post offices, etc. were burnt at Penugona, Uiavak onda, Srikakulam, Jaggavyanet, Kavali, Allur, Pentapadu, Achanta.

The Sub-Régistrar's office, police lines, and the office of the Deputy Superintendent of Police at Bhimavaram were burnt. Records of the Tanuku District Munsif's court were also burnt.

### 5. SALT RAIDS

There was a raid on the Salt Rotars at Kanuparti, Ongole Taluka, Guntur District. One out-standing event was the fire in the Government College Laboratory at Anantpore which resulted in a loss of over Rs. 50,000.

### 6. THE STUDENTS

There were strikes in almost every college throughout the Province. In certain cases the institutions had to be closed for months together. The students showed consi-

derable enthusiasm. More than 100 left off studies.

The movement saw the birth of the Students' Congress, The Youth Congress, etc. These institutions stood openly for the creed and programme of the Congress, and did excellent work.

Of the 10 districts of Andhra Desa the tempo of the movement was at its greatest intensity in the districts of Western Godawari and Guntur.

Guntur has a brilliant record. It has acquitted itself splendidly in almost every movement. The movement of 1942 was started with *hartals*, processions, and protest meetings, and culminated in attacks on Government institutions, such as courts and *thanas*.

Munsiff's court, Police Station and all Government offices were occupied by the people. On the 18th August. There was complete dislocation of civil-administration in the villages, where the people observed *hartal*, and many attempts were made to set up a National Government in the country-side. On the 13th August students of Guntur gathered and held a meeting. When the police wanted to open fire the students held the meeting in a hall.

### BAPAT TALUQ

Headquarters of the Taluq and the office of the subordinate Judge were attacked and captured by a few hundreds of people on 12th and 13th of August, but after two days Reserve Police arrived and these places again passed under the control of the Bureaucracy.

### ANDHRA UNIVERSITY CONVOCATION

The Governor was to come to Guntur in connection with the convocation of the Andhra University. Although the police made several preventive arrests of the old and tried leaders on the night of the 10th December, the people did not fail to give expression to their feelings. Black flag demonstrations were held; black flags were flown over a large area and some Railway lines were also cut over Tenali-Guntur section, the route generally taken for going to Guntur from Madras. The Governor had therefore, to come by the Bezawada-Guntur line. He was given a black flag demonstration both at the station and at the University grounds. When his car was passing cow-dung was thrown on it. The Maharani of Travancore was to

deliver the convocation address and had specially come from the Annamalai function to Madras, but at the last moment she was permitted by the Governor to cancel her visit and her address was read at the Convocation by the Vice-Chancellor. This was done as the Governor did not want Her Highness to witness the "love and affection" of the Andhra people for their alien Governor. An attempt was made by some youngmen to catch hold of the Vice-Chancellor on the evening of 11th December. A portion of the National War Front office Guntur was burnt on the 12th December. Some sheds, built for the Military in Guntur, were also burnt on 10th and 11th December.

A collective fine of 5<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> lacs of rupees was imposed on a large number of villages of Andhra province. Guntur district alone had to pay 3/4th of the sum.

### WEST GODAVARY DISTRICTS

1. *Detentions and convictions*:—From 9th Aug., 42 onwards 455 people were arrested, of whom 100 were released from the Sub-jail, 310 were convicted and 45 detained. Of the 310 convictions 20 were Communists and of the 45 detenus 6 were, again, Communists. Of the above, two died in jail, four died outside the jail, and two went underground.

2. *Flogging*:—About 40 persons were caned, the number of canes varying from 4 to 46. A Harijan student fell unconscious due to severe flogging.

3. <i>Fines</i> :—	Individual	Rs. 8,650
	Collective	Rs. 2,94,500

4. *Burnings* :—Nine railway stations were set fire to, all by the ryots. Five Government offices were burnt. Private property, including one toddy shop and a Zamindar's *thana*, were also set fire to.

5. *Removal of Rails* :—On Nidadavol-Narasapur line rails were removed at several places and passenger traffic was at a stand-still for 10 days. On Bhimavaram-Gudiwada line near Akividu the railway line was removed to the length of about a mile. Rails were also removed in some other places.

6. *Public demonstrations* : In Ellore the Andhra Circular was openly read at several places from 10th Aug., 42 onwards. Telegraph and telephone lines were cut, and Sections 144 and 56 defied. The National flag was hoisted inspite of the obstructions by the military. In

Bhimavaram the National flag was hoisted on the Revenue Divisional Office when the office was working; the Revenue Divisional Officer was forced to come out of his office, hold the National flag along with the demonstrators, and march in the procession.

#### *7. Firing*

In Bhimavaram several people from the neighbouring villages gathered round the Revenue Divisional office as a protest against the arrest of the national leaders. The police interfered and ordered the crowd to disperse. The demonstrators refused to disperse. Consequently the Police opened fire and four youngsters died on the spot, and a few were injured. The doctor who treated the injured was arrested and a case instituted against him, though he was acquitted.

#### *8. Strikes and Hartals*

Shops were closed in several towns of the districts. In Ellore, those who closed the shops were arrested and fined Rs. 59/- each. Students in several places of the district struck work and engaged mostly in stopping trains by chain-pulling, as a result of which they were either fined or caned.

#### *9. Local Boards and Municipalities*

The District Board and Palakol Municipality were superseded by the Government on the ground that they passed resolutions supporting the August Resolution.

#### *10. Excesses by Government Officials*

Four Satyagrahis in Kovvur sub-jail were severely beaten, and another beaten with *lathi* outside the jail. For two months from August 1942 onwards the police in Bhimavaram Taluk raided several villages, mercilessly beating the inhabitants.

(This district leads Andhra in sending more detenus and burning more railway stations. In the number of convictions, Guntur stands first and next comes this district.)

The role played by the people of other districts in the Andhra province was not very significant. A list of the incidents and events connected with the movement is given separately.

Military trains were derailed near Baruba in Vizagapatam, and near Ramabarappadas in Krishna. Several arrests were made, and later the prisoners were released in some cases.

## 2—KERALA PROVINCE

*The Kerala Province and its people:* The Kerala Province consists of Malabar district, a part of South Canara district, and Cochin and Travancore States.

Kerala is the province which gave birth to Shri Shankara, the great religious philosopher, to Shri Narayana Guru, the Social Revolutionary who preached Harijan uplift and abolition of Caste, long before they became political planks, to Mahakavi Kuma, and to Sir. C. Sankaran Nair who once adorned the Congress *gaddi* as its President.

During the stormy days of 1942 the people of Kerala, brave as they are, 'proved themselves worthy of the legacy that was bequeathed to them by Kerala Varma Pazhassi Raja, the "Royal Rebel," who fought the Duke of Wellington (then Col. Wellesley) to a stand-still for over a decade, and by Veluthambi Dalwa, the patriotic 'Rebel Dewan' of Travancore whose "Dead body" the Britishers "Banged unto death" after the fall of his valiant army.

In 1921, during the Non-Cooperation and *Khilafat* movement, the province witnessed the Moplah uprising, known as the Malabar Rebellion, which defied the British might for six months and paralysed the Government machinery in the Southern half of Malabar District. The Moplahs ran an indigenous Government of their own and kept up the spirit of revolt among the muslim peasants for a much longer period than anyone had thought they could.

## THE MOVEMENT

With this brilliant past record Kerala accepted the challenge of the Bureaucracy in August 1942. Within six hours of the arrest of the leaders, the most prominent congressmen of Kerala, like Shri Kelappan, K. Madhava Menon and K. A. Damodara Menon, were arrested and detained.

There were spontaneous protest meetings everywhere. Students went on strike for an indefinite period

throughout the length and breadth of the province. Colleges and High Schools had to be closed for days on end for want of attendance. Mammoth processions went winding through the streets of the towns. All the prominent workers from all the Talukas including the presidents and Secretaries of the Congress Committees, as also the student leaders were arrested within ten days of the passing of the "Quit India" resolution.

### • DEMONSTRATIONS

At many places the people marched in their thousands to the nearest courts and registration offices and closed them. This was a special feature in the Kurumbrand Taluka. At Payyoli a procession of 1000 persons marched up to the Munsiff's court, the police Thana and the Sub-Magistrate's office and got them closed one by one. They then proceeded to Jakkoli village and held a meeting there. A lorry with 25 constables arrived, but seeing the strength and temper of the people, they did not dare to interfere with them. After the dispersal of the meeting they arrested 17 men, the supposed leaders. Meetings and processions however continued to be held in several parts of Malabar district, resulting mostly in *lathi* charges.

Another feature of the non-violent demonstrations was picketting of courts of law. Crowds gathered in front of the courts and demanded their closure. Several courts, including the North Malabar District Court at Tellicherry, the subordinate Judge's court, the Payyoli Munsiff's court, Qulady, Calicut, Badagara, Ottapalam and Palghat were closed for a number of days. The administration of justice was paralysed for a few days.

### DISLOCATION OF ADMINISTRATIVE MACHINERY

The Sub-Magistrate's office at Chemanchery was completely gutted and all records were burnt. The Government timber godown at Kallai was set fire to and timber worth several thousands was burnt. A bomb exploded in the Sub-Magistrate's court at Tellichery and brought down a wall of the building. Fire was caused at the fish curing yard at Mukali, resulting in considerable damage.

### CHIRALLAL

- (1) A Sub-post-office in Cannanore was bombed at

night. The whole building was not destroyed, but a portion of it was badly damaged. Splinters were scattered over an area of 64 sq. yards according to confidential police reports. (2) A Government High school shed used for holding classes was burnt down. (3) Telegraph wires half a mile distance were cut and removed.

### KOTTAYAN

(1) Five village Andhikaris' (village Patels' offices were burnt and records destroyed. (2) A Sub-Magistrate's office near Kuthuparamba is also reported to have been burnt. (3) Petti Palam (Palam means bridge), the railway bridge between Tellichery and Mahe, was dynamited. The damage was not serious, but a few stones were blown out.

### KUSUMBRANAD

(1) An attempt to burn Mahe and Nadapuram Road Rly. Stations was made. Portions of the buildings were charred but the fire was put out. (2) The salt Depot at Mukali in Mahe was completely gutted. (3) A Rly. Bridge between Mahe and Nadapuram Road was dynamited and the parapet wall and the pillars were damaged. (4) Nadapuram Munsiff's court was dynamited and partly damaged.

### CALICUT

(1) Kallai Rly. bridge between Calicut and Kallai was dynamited. Here again, it was not fully effective. (2) Govt. Timber yard at Kallai was set fire to, which was discovered after a while, and the fire was put out. Damage amounting to a few thousands was caused. (3) The European Golf Club house, and the motor shed at Mayaramba near Calicut were burnt on the 21st night.

### BRANAD

(1) The road bridge near Manchari was completely destroyed by dynamite. An attempt to blow up another did not succeed. (2) An effort to destroy High Cock Memorial (Moplah Rebellion Memorial) resulted in partial success.

Mob fury was witnessed at Chemmancheri in North Malaca, where the Railway station and sub-Registrar's office were burnt to ashes. At Ulliyeri, a bridge was demolished. Cutting of telegraph and telephone wires

were things of daily occurrence for months together, in various parts of the Malabar district. A country bomb exploded at Pallikkunnu, near Cannanore and demolished the Post-Office there. At Nabapuram the Munsiff's court, at Tellicherry, the sub-court at Naduvannore the sub-Registrar's office, at Chombal, the Government fish-curing yard, were all either exploded or set fire to. A few railway stations and many railway bridges were destroyed. The inhabitants of a small factory town called Feroke, which was once the Malabar Head Quarters of Tippu Sultan, woke up one night, hearing a loud explosion which caused considerable damage to the Feroke Railway bridge. Appukutty, a petty tea-shop keeper, who happened to be a congressman was taken into custody.

The Governor's Special Car, while proceeding from Cannanore to Calicut, was held up in the night at Chombal, by a huge fire on the railway line. At Ernakulam the *Pandal* in which the Governor of Madras was to have addressed a meeting was in flames a few minutes before the arrival of His Excellency.

Civil disobedience, mass meetings, monster processions and picketing continued to be the order of the day in Malabar. Hundreds were being rushed to the jails for peaceful as well as sabotage activities. Gandhi Jayanti was celebrated on unprecedented scale throughout Malabar in 1942. Almost all the schools and colleges were deserted. Deserted *bazars* throughout Malabar proclaimed that Gandhiji was in jail.

It was the students of Calicut who first had the sting of insult at the arrest of the national leaders at Bombay, and led demonstrations in the province. On the 9th August the students of Ganapathy High School and the two colleges came out of their respective classes and gathered outside their institutions in demonstration as a protest against the arrest of the national leaders. The educational authorities tried in vain to get them round to their classes and requisitioned the help of the police. The police interefered and threatened them with a *lathi* charge. But the students continued to be defiant.

### KOLLENGODE

Here the students' love for their leaders, and their personal bravery were quite unique. When they gathered in demonstration outside their institution the police interfered and tried to compel them to go back to their classes. The students refused. Then the police drew out

their revolvers, loaded them, and pointed them at the students with the intention of firing on them. But some of the students unbuttoned their shirts and exposed their chests to the loaded revolvers, in quite a non-challant manner. This happened on the 10th August.

### BAIPUR

Here the people burnt some motor boats and country-craft with a view to stop all traffic on the river.

### TELLICHERRY

Here, in the premises of the Sessions Court, there was explosion of a crude bomb as a result of which a part of the court building was destroyed.

### FEROKE

On the Feroke Railway bridge 3 live bombs were placed at a certain spot, expecting them to explode when any train passed over the bridge. One goods train passed by, when two of the bombs missed the wheels and the third exploded with no effect.

### FAMINE, CHOLERA AND SMALL-POX

With the banning of peaceful public demonstrations and the severe repression by the authorities, the movement naturally went underground and there was a lull. Symptoms of a very severe famine were visible everywhere. Rice, the staple food of Malabar, was usually imported from Burma. With the loss of Burma, the import of Burma rice ceased and a severe famine was in sight. It was at this juncture that some Congress workers revived Grama Seva Sangham which was originally started by the P. C. C. In spite of wide-spread agitation for facilities for the import of grains from other parts of the province, the authorities could not find their way to do so, and to relieve the distress of the people due to food scarcity. The result was that by the beginning of 1943, Cholera, and small-pox swept the famine-stricken areas. A non-official estimate of the loss of lives comes to 40,000. Sri Thacker Bappa of the All India Harijan Sevak Sangh, and Sreemathi Kamaladevi visited the districts. At a time when the national leaders were behind the prison bars, it was with the greatest difficulty that the Cholera Relief Committee was formed. But

the handsome donations from Bombay, and the excellent work turned out by young workers, headed by Sri K.V. Gopal menon Shreemati G. Susheela, and other Congress volunteers, it would not have been possible to stem the tide of the epidemics. The committee started about 120 centres with the help of 368 volunteers who served and treated about 12,192 patients. Of these 9,412 lives were saved. As a result of the epidemics a large number of children were thrown in the streets as orphans. The Gram Seva Sangham had to take charge of them and start orphanages. This work was helped and supplemented by the late lamented Mr. A. R. Nayanar of the Servants of India Society. About four orphanages are being run even now.

### CONSTRUCTIVE PROGRAMME

It is to be noted that no aspect of the Congress Constructive programme was neglected by the Committee. They started about 20 spinning centres of which several were run by Desaiya Mahila Samaj. Even to-day two weaving centres are run by the Samaj. Other constructive items were also attended to. The Government, be it noted, would not allow peace even to the humanitarian workers. Arrest and temporary detention of the volunteers of the Gram Seva Sangh was part of the Government routine. The premises of their offices in different villages were searched, boards and flags removed, and public meetings convened by them also declared illegal.

### HELP TO BENGAL

The Cholera-stricken Malabar did not forget their distressed sister province of Bengal. A medical unit was sent to Bengal under Sri K. U. Kurup who attended upon about 11,265 patients of Murshidabad and Berobar.

### CONFERENCES IN DEFIANCE OF BAN

Despite the famine and epidemics the Congress was carrying on the usual activities in the form of Conferences and meetings. Two conferences were held in spite of the ban; one at Calicut and the other at Badagara. There were severe police *lathi*-charges, but only one conviction. During Gandhiji's fast also volunteers started for Poona on foot from Malabar. About 22 of them were arrested and convicted on their way to Poona.

## REPRESSION

*Lathi* charging of peaceful processions was taken in hand quite early, as a matter of policy. The investigation of sabotage cases was conducted with an unprecedented amount of severity. The police took many innocent people into custody, and applied all known third degree methods. Cases are reported in which even today prominent Congress workers, like Koru of Feroke and Balakrishnan of Quilandy, are suffering from organic diseases as a result of their short stay in police lock-up. It was as though the country was under martial law. Several houses were subjected to searches at night by the police.

A case, known as the Tellicherry Conspiracy Case, was foisted upon the Chief lieutenants and pro-Congress workers of Narayanan, and the accused in that case were alleged to have been responsible for all the explosions, burnings and wire cuttings in North Malabar. Balan was sentenced to 10 years and five others to 7 years each.

With the coming of Dr. K. B. Menon, V. K. Kesavan Nair, C. P. Sankaran Nair, Mathai Manjuran and N. A. Krishnan Nair to Malabar from Bombay, the movement gained further momentum. The result was the institution of the famous case, known as the Keezhariyur Bomb case, against them by the joint efforts of the police and the communists. Dr. K. B. Menon, secretary of the All India Civil Liberties Union, and more than a dozen co-workers of his, were sentenced to various terms ranging from seven to ten years' R.I.

## THE COMMUNISTS

The movement of 1942 was a fight on two fronts in Kerala. The one against the Government and the other against the Communists. The Communists helped the police in every way in crushing the nationalist struggle under their 'Peoples' War' slogan. At Tellicherry when the Head Master of a High School shoed a young student for shouting "*Mahatma Gandhi Ki Jai*" and the students resorted to strike as a protest, the Communists were seen going from door to door requesting the students to attend school, and the parents to send them to school, and thus pocket the insult.

## TOLL OF REPRESSION

In these circumstances, with the police on the one

hand and the communists on the other, and, above all in famine and cholera conditions, the sufferings which the people of Malabar underwent can well be imagined. The Congressmen of Kerala met these all round repressions with great heroism. 720 persons were convicted and 33 detained.

### THE MARTYRS

Navinchand Iswarlal Shroff was the first martyr in the province. He was a *Gujrati* student aged 19, studying in the Intermediate Class of the Zamorin's College at Calicut. Immediately after the arrest of the leaders, he was sentenced to a fine of Rs. 75 or in default to three months' imprisonment. His mother went to the court to pay the fine. "Mother, if you pay the fine, you will never see your son Naveen alive" were the brave words uttered by Naveen to his mother. With tears in her eyes the mother turned back. The boy courted imprisonment and was sent to Alipuram Jail. He was placed in 'C' class and was refused his usual wheat diet. The jail food proved to be quite unwholesome to his system and he fell ill. It took full one month for the Alipuram Jail doctors to find out that the boy was actually suffering from Typhoid and not Malaria. Tears trickled down the cheeks of every co-prisoner who saw the lovely boy lying on his death-bed. The prisoners threatened to go on hunger-strike if the boy was not removed to the Head quarters Hospital. The Medical Officer was finally persuaded by somebody to send the boy outside, for better treatment. On December 31, 1942, four days prior to the date of his release, the bold boy passed away as a prisoner in police custody, at the Bellary Head quarters Hospital.

Kombikutty Menon and Kunshiraman lost their lives inside the jail. Sri I. S. Prabhu ex-president of the Kerala Provincial Congress Committée was released from the General Hospital as a physical wreck, and died soon after his release. Sri. P. K. Kunsisankara Menon, a prominent Congress worker also died soon after his release.

### IN TRAVANCORE

In Travancore the Government censor of news was so efficient that no publicity was given to the activities of the State Congress, which adopted the August Resolution, and sent about a hundred persons to jail.

## IN COCHIN

In Cochin also the people stood firmly by the 'Quit India' resolution, and more than 150 persons courted arrest. The activities of students of Trichur and Ernakulam in Cochin State deserve special mention. Even girl students were beaten by the police, inside as well as outside the school premises.

3. *TAMIL NADU*

## THE PROVINCE AND ITS PEOPLE

The Tamilians are just the opposite of the Andhrites. They are armed with an incisive and analytic mind, and an impressive array of facts. Others cannot bamboozle them. But, alas, it is a weapon that they turn against themselves, and like a child with a sword in its hands, they so often cut their own throats. It is high time that they disavowed the tyranny of false reasoning. This characteristic feature of Tamilians has sometimes proved disastrous to the politics of the Province, as well as to the National Body Politic.

The Tamilians have a great culture, as well as a brilliant past. Their literature has not been much touched by external influences, and is a true representative of the genius of the people, for whom it speaks and by whom it is made.

The Tamilians tend to accept single leadership. The unity which we find in the Tamil literature is carried in the field of politics also. But the Tamilians' zeal for fighting the Nations' battle has also been matchless, and their devotion for Mahatma Gandhi and his principles and programme has been unquestioned.

## THE MOVEMENT AND THE TEMPERAMENT

The Tamilians tend towards a centre. They concentrate their energies towards a particular point and see it to a successful finish, with the doggedness of a Marhatta soldier. The Movement, therefore, has been a great success in Tamil Nadu. At many places like Madras, Tanjore, Trichinopoly, Kumbakaram and Madura, the Movement has been intense, sustained, vigorous and has had an accelerated tempo. The character of the movement was non-violent throughout. Even the youngmen who take pleasure in shedding blood preferred to

remain non-violent in Tamil Nadu. They continued their struggle against the British, but at not a single place did they make any attempt on the life of a white man or his Indian hirelings.

## ARREST OF LEADERS AND THE MOVEMENT -

When the news of the arrest of the Congress Leaders was received by the people of Tamil Nadu, their hearts were overwhelmed with sorrow and grief, and their minds became full of schemes and plans for conducting themselves in the future in the absence of their leaders. There were *hartals*, demonstrations and processions throughout the Province, on and after the 9th August. At many places the non-violent, peaceful and disciplined people were *lathi*-charged and tear-gassed, yet the people remained firm like a rock, did not fall upon the aggressor, but just violated the restrictions and regulations imposed by him. Defiance of the foreigner as a ruler was the characteristic feature of the movement in Tamil Nadu. At every stage was the enemy defied and the defiance was made, not only by the people who were politically conscious but by all and sundry. Even little children, just out of their mother's lap, did not lag behind.

## THE STUDENTS

Splendid was the role that was played by the students of Tamil Nadu. Everywhere they were on the front. Though some of them went under-ground and indulged in sabotage and dislocation activities, but the bulk of them acted as true soldiers of Mahatma Gandhi.

On hearing the news of the arrest of Gandhiji and the Congress leaders, there was complete strike in all the colleges of the Madras Presidency, e.g. Loyalla Pachaiappa, Christian, Queen Mary's, and the Medical and Engineering Colleges. Flags were hoisted on the Medical and Engineering Colleges, and their hostels. In one of the two hostels, when the flags were forcibly taken down, the students took up the flags and marched out of the hostels in a body.

Schools were on strike for a week. The Students' processions were severely *lathi*-charged. The order of whipping, passed on 2nd September on 2 boys of Loyalla College, only served to stiffen the attitude of the students. An Engineering College joined the strike on this issue.

The Government issued a notification that boys who did not join classes on a particular date would have their names struck off the rolls. This threat proved unavailing. The colleges were then officially closed for some time. There were strikes in schools and colleges throughout the presidency. They took an active part in demonstrations and other activities. Quite a large number of them were arrested.

## LABOURERS

The labourers of the Province did not lag behind. Their battle was against the capitalists but they knew that without ousting the British as the ruler, it was not possible to kill capitalism. So, when the battle against the British started, the labourers in their thousands actively participated in it.

The Madras mills went on strike. Among them was the Buckingham and Carnatic, which is managed by the Westerners. It was wholly devoted to production of *Khaki* for soldiers.

The Railway service in South India was disorganised to a considerable extent. Many through trains were cancelled. Those that ran did so at 15 miles an hour at night, and were piloted by an Engine. The pilot engine would go two stations ahead, and give line clear. Near Bezvada 20 miles of rails were removed with the active assistance of gangmen. The trains between Madras and Calcutta did not run for a fortnight.

The workers of other industrial centres of the Province did the same, specially those of Coimbatore. They absented themselves for a number of days from mills and factories.

### 4—TRICHY DISTRICT

#### THE MOVEMENT IN THE DISTRICTS

There were two derailments, one near Karur on the Trichy-Erode line, the other very near Trichy on the Trichy-Madura line. Removal of fish-plates went on in the various sections of the south Indian Railway at several points.

As a result of these activities every train leaving Madras was carrying two vans of armed policemen. The local government issued orders to village officers to depute

the village guardsmen to patrol the railway lines at all hours, day and night.

Though nothing was reported in the newspapers, railway lines were removed on the sections branching off from Maniyachi junction. A military contingent of 100 Punjabi sepoys was stationed at that junction to patrol the line.

The railway station at Mannargudy was attacked by a large crowd and set fire to. Then the Station was set fire to. A train arrived at Mannargudy from Nidamangalam; the people forced the train to be backed to Nidamangalam.

#### 5—RAMNAD DISTRICT

This district deserves special mention. The struggle carried on by this district was swift and total. The entire system of communications was disorganised. Tiruvadani is the headquarters of a Taluq. All the villagefolk gathered in a central place and decided that they should march towards, Tiruvadani, and destroy or capture all centres of British authority. They sent a word to the police sub-Inspector that the people's *Raj* was established and that he should surrender. The Inspector advised all the policemen to remove their dresses and shift for themselves. The people captured the police station, seized the two rifles kept there, broke open the sub-jail, released the prisoners, and then set fire to the Government offices. All communications were cut and roads blocked. A branch road was however inadvertently left open. After a few days of these happenings the military poured in through this route. The police and the Military considered no foulness too foul, and no brutality too brutal in suppressing the people. Ramnad district became 'Jallianwalla Bagh' and 'Chimur' put together. Women were raped in the most cruel and shameless manner, the people looted, and whole villages burnt. There were indiscriminate arrests and beatings. Nothing was thought of shooting the people.

#### 6—COIMBATORE DISTRICT

A group of 22 villages near the burnt aerodrome was declared "protected." The people were not allowed to enter there. The Malabar Special Police enacted the 'Chimur' incident in this area. Almost all the male inhabitants were arrested and kept standing together in a

very small enclosed space, which put to shame even the much talked of 'Black Hole.' There was not space enough even for standing, but they were kept there for over a week, and all this only about 30 to 40 yards from the Magistrate's Camp. The women of the village had to bring food for their males and when they came the M.S.P. used to make his choice and find out their names and attack the village in the night for their victims. This went on for days, almost under the nose of the Magistrate, and he did nothing.

### 7—TANJORE DISTRICT

At Tiruvadi, Tanjore District, a mob broke into the district Munsiff's court and-subregistrar's office between 9 and 10 A.M. on the 13th August, removed cash from the safe, and generally broke up the offices, according to a press note issued on the 14th August by Government of Madras. The press note added. "The mob destroyed some papers, but did not enter the record room."

### COIMBATORE

It is an industrial area having 40 mills, a couple of big automobile workshops, two Technical Institutes and one newly opened Engineering College. That is why Coimbatore is called the Ahmedabad of the Madras Presidency. On the 9th August a meeting was held, and there was a big *hartal* in the city. A goods train proceeding from Pondanur to Singanallur on the main line was derailed. Fish plates were found removed. Two engines and 11 vehicles capsized. The train was carrying ammunition. Though this was not a mass action, the Government lost very valuable goods in this derailment.

The military aerodrome at Coimbatore was completely destroyed by fire. Law courts in several places were picketed. A large number of liquor shops were burnt.

### MADRAS

Madras, the capital of the Presidency, is on the Coromandel coast; it has developed from Fort St. George, with a harbour exposed to cyclones; it possesses a university, colleges of medicine, art, law, engineering and agriculture, and a large museum,

When the news of the arrest of the Congress leaders reached Madras city a wide-spread indignation was felt at the wanton aggression launched upon by the British. *Hartals* were organised, processions were taken out, students and labourers participated in large numbers. An incident took place at Chetpur on the 11th August, 1942 when a large crowd of students from Colleges attempted to take out a procession. They were prevented from doing so by the police, and were ordered to disperse. On their disregarding the order the police made a *Lathi*-charge. Some students were injured. A sub-inspector and 4 constables were also injured by brickbats. On the 12th August a small procession from the school of Technology was dispersed in Broadway by a mild *lathi*-charge.

The students and other processionists attacked the city and suburban railway stations, looted and burnt the available records, and cut wires. It is also reported that in the vicinity of Madras City rails and culverts were pulled off.

## MADURA

Madura is a city of temples and of Aryan culture. True to the Aryan traditions of freedom and liberty it did not show any indifference to the Movement. As elsewhere, the people of this city also felt restless, and sought to avenge the national humiliation. But they could not be violent. They organised demonstrations and took out processions. There was a serious trouble between the police and the insurgents, on the 11th, in the presence of the District Magistrate. 12 persons were dangerously wounded, 22 got simple injuries, while 3 died at the spot.

## KUMBAKONAM

At about 7 A.M. on the 16th August about 10,000 rioters collected and barricaded the streets in Kumbakonam in defiance of an order under section 144 Cr. P.C. They threw stones, brickbats and glass at the police party, and injured a number of policemen, the district magistrate, the joint magistrate, and the district suptd. of police. The *Lathi* charge to disperse the rioters proved ineffective and the situation became critical, 19 rounds were then fired.

## OTHER ACTS OF SABOTAGE -

Railway and police stations were burnt at least at 100 places in the Province. Railway lines, and telephone and telegraph wires were extensively damaged all over the Province. Malabar-Cochin Express was held up for one week at Tirpur. At a place 9 miles away from Coimbatore there was a military camp. About 200 tanks belonging to the military were burnt. The camp was in a valley. The people gathered on the hill, set fire to the camp, and threw stones on the tanks. Military opened fire, resulting in 20-30 casualties. About 68 rows of camps were completely burnt and later the personal property belonging to the soldiers was burnt. In the rural areas also there were many massacres of defiance and dislocation. About 20 miles away from Coimbatore all the local offices were burnt. At Ramnad, extensive damage was done to the lines, and many stations were burnt in the District. One day in December, bombs were found under the lawyers' seats in two court rooms, but they were put out before they could explode. A few days later a similar incident occurred in the corridor of the Madras High Court. The bombs on both the occasions were detected before the explosion.

## REPRESSION

Government imposed collective fines on the inhabitants of the following villages, which were responsible for causing damage to government and railway property.

- |                                      |          |            |
|--------------------------------------|----------|------------|
| 1. Managgudi                         | ...      | Rs. 50,000 |
| 2. Triveli village, Tanjore District |          | Rs. 20,000 |
| 3. Karaikudi                         | ...      | Rs. 50,000 |
| 4. Poolankurichi village (Ramnad     |          |            |
|                                      | District | Rs. 5000   |

The use of section 144 Cr. P.C. Rule 36 of D.I.R. and again Rule 56, was made almost indiscriminately at many places, for which the High Court and Sessions Judges also had to pass stringent remarks against the police authority. The people were beaten mercilessly without reference to their crime, age and condition of health. Women were molested. Even use was made of air-raid sirens. Fearing several breeches of Section 144 Cr. P.C. air-raid sirens were sounded in addition to the usual police arrangements to prevent the people from taking out processions to celebrate Gandhiji's birthday on the 2nd October.

The police in Madura shot dead several persons for breach of the curfew order. One particularly callous case of murder by the police was the shooting down of a man who was compelled to go out at night to call a nearby Doctor to attend upon his wife who could not later survive the shock of her husband's death.

### DEVAKOTTAH TRAGEDY

The Devakottah tragedy will throw ample light on the repressive measures adopted by the authorities in Tamil Nadu.

Devokottah is a town in the extreme south of India. In August and September, beatings, torture, loot, arson, and assaults on women by the Police and British Military were the order of the day, in the town and the several villages in its vicinity.

The terrorism and atrocities committed by the Malabar police, and by the British Military in Devakottah and other places in Ramnad District, were horrible and heart-rending. Innumerable crimes were being committed daily for one month, and it became impossible for the people to live in these parts peacefully. Those who wore Khaddar were severely beaten. Many Chettiers with respectable connections were abused in vulgar language, insulted and beaten. Many youngmen were violently handled while in remand, with the result that in many cases their finger-nails were torn off.

The police looted all the articles in the famous Saraswati Library. They entered a marriage house, *lathi*-charged the bride-groom, and drove out the marriage party. The police and the military carried on these nefarious tasks in the locality with the help of the local hooligans. The tragedies of 'Jalianwala Bagh' were repeated here. The innocent villagers, abandoning their houses and property, fled to the jungles for safety. A few examples of such crimes and atrocities are given below:-

(1) On the 25th August 1942, the wife of one Kayabu Mudaliar, in the village of Andhivayal, was cruelly disgraced by the police. (2) On the 26th August, the police made a search for one Gopalakesavan; as he was not to be found, they made his wife the victim of many barbaric atrocities, such as stripping her naked and spoiling her honour in the most cruel way in a public street by ten Police men, and then by ten Pallas, a class of untouchables. What became of the woman is

not known. (3) On the 13th September, the wife of one Muthiruleppa Servai and three other women of the village of Vilankattoor were taken in a bus to Thirubadanai, where, inside the sub-jail, they were subjected to cold-blooded atrocities. They were tied to the trees, made naked, and their breasts were squeezed and twisted by the Pallas. Four white sergeants screwed their *lathis* into their private parts. Blood gushed out and these innocent women, unable to bear the torture, smote their heads against the walls and died. What became of their corpses, nobody knows. On the 14th September the above said Muthirulappa Servai, who was aged 55, was shot dead by the Police. On that day, houses of many innocent people were set on fire and burnt to ashes. (4) On the 15th September, one Nagadi Nagappan was tortured, mutilated and murdered. (5) On the 19th August, the house of one Ramaswami Servai in Thiruvadanai was burnt to ashes. As he was not to be found, his two sons were arrested by the Police. (6) The houses of Velu Servai, Muthukamaksi Pillai, Shanmugham, Kadiresa Melakkar, Avudai, Odhurvar and Nagaswami Pillai were also burnt. (7) In the villages of Kakkalathus, Kakkacheri and Muppaiyur, houses and granaries were burnt by the Police. Most of the houses in the village of Venniyur were also burnt. Three hundred Kalams of paddy were looted and the remainder burnt to ashes. (8) The fields of one Karmegam who was then in Burma, were looted and burnt down. His cattle too were shot. Five women of the village also suffered terribly at the hands of the Police and were disgraced. (9) In the village of Athangudi, one Velu Thevar and two Pallas were bound hand and foot, shoed on their heads, and forced to drink urine. (10) Most of the houses in Kavathukudi, Monnaiyur Thirumanaiyassal, and other villages were set on fire and granaries looted. Every day hundreds of innocent village-folk were brought to Karai-kudi in Police vans and tortured. All the people in a street in the town of Devakottah were asked to quit their houses and driven out. As they were unable to carry their belongings, they lived in the vicinity under great hardships.

The Police atrocities in Ramnad have already been narrated above.

### TORTURE OF SATYAGRAHIS

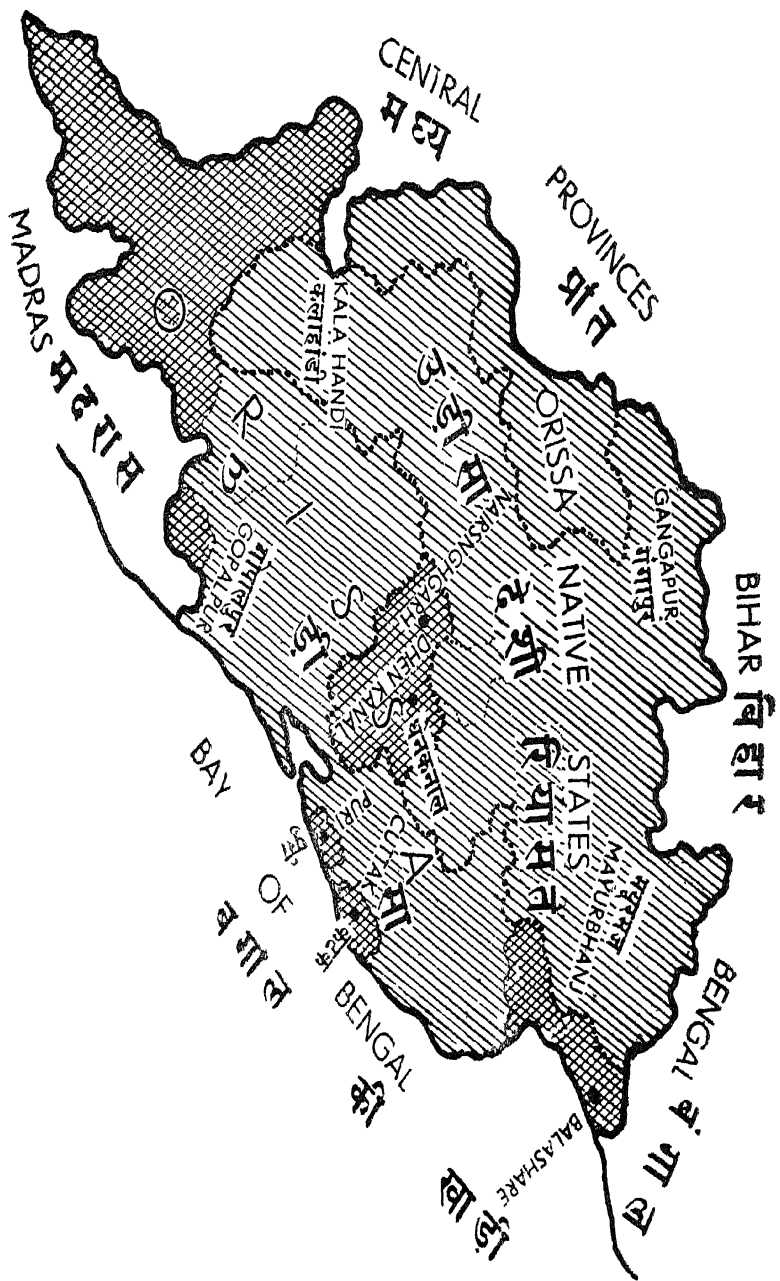
One of the common methods of torture practised by

the police in Madura was to take the arrested persons out into the jungle, miles away from the city, beat them mercilessly, burn all their clothing, and then release them.

### BLINDNESS OF THE BUREAUCRACY

In their enthusiasm to enforce the Curfew order, the police of Madura were reported to have shot down some donkeys who were found on the road during the curfew hours.





## CHAPTER IX

### ORISSA PROVINCE

The area of the province is 30,000 sq. miles and its population is about 10 lacs.

Arrests	...	1970
Convictions	...	560
Detentions	...	11
Demonstrations	...	600
<i>Lathi</i> -charges	...	350
Collective fines	...	Rs. 1,16,000
Molestation of women	...	12 cases
Firings	...	6 times
Deaths	...	76
Wounded	...	2243

### SOCIO-POLITICAL BACKGROUND

Like Sind, Orissa was constituted a separate province on April, 1936. If Sind was a separate geographical, ethnological and linguistic unit inside the administrative boundary of the Bombay Presidency, the new province of Orissa is the result of the amalgamation of various Oriya-speaking peoples who had till then belonged to three separate provinces, viz., Bihar and Orissa, Madras and the Central Provinces.

The Oriyas are an intensely partriotic people, who bear great love for their culture and language. They have always opposed any move to dismember the Oriya-speaking tracts for political or administrative considerations. The Oriyas trace their traditions far back to the days of Mahabharata, when there was the ancient kingdom of Utkal, embracing the wide territory now known as Orissa.

The Oriyas combine in themselves all the virtues of Andhriles, and the vices of the Bengalees. This amusing and conflicting combination of cultural traits has a great

bearing on the trend of the socio-political life of the province and is distinctly traceable in the people of the Northern district of Balasore and southern district of Ganjam. The Province has many feudatory landlords who join the British in exploiting the people. It is for this reason that there have been many agrarian risings in this province and, unlike elsewhere, the prominent leaders of this province have taken an active part in such movements. There are many peasant organisations under whose aegis anti-landlord movements were launched from time to time since 1922.

### FEAR OF JAP AGGRESSION

In April 1942 the Japanese torpedoed many British ships on the eastern Orissa coast. Jap invasion was imminent. The Government removed their headquarters from Cuttack to 150 miles inland in Sambhalpore. There was considerable panick everywhere. The Government seized every means of communication and transport, even country boats and cycles. It passed orders that all the rice and paddy should be sent 20 miles off the coast-line. People were thus rendered helpless and embittered against the British. The Congress leaders tried to assist the people in keeping up their morale. They defended the people of all the coastal towns. They studied the conditions thus arisen, of the people of the coastal-areas. They divided the coastal areas into many zones and every zone was provided with a band of picked-volunteers to ameliorate the conditions of the people, and safeguard their liberties. The Government interfered, suspecting a move against the British, and forced the Congress to stop its relief work.

This unwanted interference made by the Government infuriated the people in almost all the towns such as Cuttack, Balasore, Puri, Barhanpur, Sambhalpore etc. Even in villages many protest meetings were held against the ban imposed on the Congress prohibiting it from continuing with its relief work in the coastal areas.

### ARREST OF CONGRESS LEADERS

Just on the eve of this mental confusion and psychological tension, came the news of the arrest of the Congress leaders at Bombay. This act of national humiliation further embittered the people of this Province; sent up their passions to a very high pitch, and made them

much more convinced that the British were not only not able to defend the people against a foreign enemy, but were also active in strangulating their elementary rights and civil liberties. They, therefore, decided to bring the British rule to an end, and to retaliate to the best of their ability.

### NATURE OF THE MOVEMENT

There was no sustained movement in Orissa. It was more of a sporadic nature. The first reaction caused by the wholesale arrest of the Congress leaders was manifested in spontaneous *hartals* and protest meetings, which later on developed into organised and disorganised efforts to seize government institutions. The Movement was not sustained in the province mainly because of the fact that most of the Congress leaders had already been arrested, and also because the feeling of the people of the Province had by now become so much anti-British and violent that they started indulging in the sort of violence for which they had received the least training.

The salient feature of the movement was its retribution. Attempts and endeavours were made to break the morale and physical hold of the landed aristocracy, for the people had age-long grievances against the landlords. These zamindars fell back upon Muslim support for their protection. This was, indeed, an unholy landlord-Muslim alliance. The Government, on their part, exempted the Muslim population from the payment of collective fines. At many places government authorities used *goondas* to suppress and terrorise the insurgents. The intensity of the movement was greater in Balasore, Cuttack and Koraput. Indeed, all the 6 districts of the Province were affected by the Movement, but it was the Koraput District where the whole population of the District participated in the Movement. Three fourths of the population of Balasore District, and half the population of the Cuttack District, took active part in the movement.

### ROLE OF STUDENTS

The students of the Province took an active part in the Movement, so much so that almost all the Government communiques issued from Cuttack alleged that the movement was purely a student's revolt against the authorities. Like their fraternity in other provinces

the students of Orissa gave lead to the masses, organised protest meetings and *hartals*. Most of them employed terrorist methods to overawe the authorities, and to paralyse the administration. For a number of days educational institutions remained closed. The students made vigorous endeavours to take public institutions under their control, and their success at many places was by no means insignificant. They persuaded the officials to shift their allegiance to the Congress, and form themselves into an army of freedom. Many students got into courts and asked the judges to resign. At a number of places the officials who refused to align themselves with insurgents were manhandled and beaten. The part played by the girl-students was by no means insignificant. They also expressed themselves violently. The record established by the students of Ravenshaw Girls college (Cuttack) is unique, and is indicative of the patriotic passions that had seized even the women-folk of the District.

### WOMEN'S ROLE

I have shown in the preceding paragraph how the girls in schools and colleges behaved during those great days of the revolution. Women in the countryside did not lag behind, and did not prove unworthy of their sisters and daughters in institutions. At Eram, after the police firing, some 200 women came forth, stood before the police and declared *Swaraj*. They took the message of *Swaraj* to their respective areas. They forced those who hoarded paddy to part with their stocks, and distributed it among the needy people. They compelled the Police President of the village Panchayat to surrender his papers. At other places also the women played their significant roles and elbowed their menfolk in the nation's battle for liberty.

### REPRESSION

The ministerial party under the leadership of the Maharaja of Parlakimedi formed a Ministry in the Province, after the resignation tendered by the Congress, and thus did not give chance to the gubernatorial regime of the Governor to terrorise and oppress the people. I am not apologetic for the omissions and commissions of the Parlakimedi Cabinet. Indeed, the methods employed by the authorities elsewhere were not found unpopular with the local authorities. But there was surely a difference

in the degree of harshness and callousness. People in this Province were much more violent and recriminatory than elsewhere, but their baptism of the share of harsh-treatment was far less. There was another reason for this. While the Government of the Province was not prepared to face a popular movement, faced as they were with the imminent danger of Japanese aggression, and therefore, panicky and in a mood to retreat, the people were prepared to launch a movement, because their sufferings had robbed them of all patience, and their heads and hearts were full of hatred for the British.

As elsewhere, firing was resorted to and *lathi-charges* were made at many places, resulting in the death of a number of people; some of the villages were burnt and looted; women were molested; menfolk were harassed; the leaders and workers were jailed; people's property was confiscated; peaceful and constructive institutions like *Khadi Ashrams* were locked, and collective fines were imposed in many villages.

### 1. KORAPUT DISTRICT

Arrests	...	1970
Detentions	...	11
Convictions	...	560
Demonstrations	...	63
<i>Hartals</i>	...	nil
<i>Lathi charges</i>	...	24
Firings	...	41 rounds at 2 places
Deaths	...	28
Injured	...	2147
Government buildings attacked		3
Fines imposed by courts	Rs 11,200	
"            realised	Rs. 9,371	
Value of property confiscated	Rs. 9000	
Houses burnt by the police		4
Molestation of women		12

Three persons were suspended by the legs to a tree and were beaten with canes and *lathis*. Indiscriminate caning and *lathi-charging* was done almost throughout the District.

Names of organisations banned: (1) Koraput D.C.C. and the Primary Congress Bodies under it. (2) Khadi Bhandar at Jeypore.

This District is a partially excluded area under the Government of India Act of 1935. The entire district is a zamindari, the *Zmindar* being the Maharaja of Jeypore. Koraput had the misfortune of being governed under a dual system, the authorities being the government on the one hand and the *Zamindar* on the other. This is the most reactionarily governed and oppressed area. Out of an income of Rs. 20,00,000 the *Zamindar* pays only Rs. 16,000 to the government as *Peishkash*.

### THE MOVEMENT BEGINS

When the news of the arrest of the Congress leaders reached district Koraput the people rose *en masse* in revolt against the British. *Hartals* were organised everywhere in the district to demonstrate the anger of the people against the national humiliation. So high was the tension created by the assault on the nation by the British, and so great was the fury of the people, that they did not wait for further stimulation to plunge into sabotage and dislocation activities.

### SABOTAGE ACTIVITIES

People began sabotage activities by tampering with telephone and telegraph wires, and rails and culverts. At many places trees in reserve forests were felled; railway sleepers were destroyed; bridges were damaged; inspection bungalows, and those belonging to the Forest Department, were burnt; attack was made on the *thanas* and records were destroyed; schools, Courts, and Excise shops were picketed.

### REPRESSION

The repression in the district reached its culmination in the shooting by the police at Mathili in Malkhangiri Taluk, and at Pappadahandi in Nourangapore Taluk. The story of the former is that on 28th Aug., 42 a party of 2000 persons, under the leadership of Sri Laksham, Naik of Tentuligumma in Malkangiri Taluk went to Mathili village. A meeting was held. Naik exhorted the people to non-cooperate with the British Government. The Police Inspector announced that as Naik's speech was sedi-

tious he was under arrest. Then the mob followed their leader to the police station, where it was asked to disperse, but without giving time to do so. Immediately *lathi* charge and firing was resorted to. 6 persons died on the spot, and more than 100 were injured. Lakshmana Naik was speared and bayoneted to the point of disfigurement, short of being killed. Many others shared the same fate. In the melee that ensued, one forest guard of Jeypore Estate, who was drunk at the time, fell down by accident in a canal near the police station. He is actually said to have died of injuries received on his head during the *lathi*-charge by the police. No-body was arrested on the spot. About 8 or 10 days later the Collector and Superintendent of police arrived. They ransacked all the villages in order to start a false case against Congressmen and their sympathisers. A big Sessions case against Lakshman Naik and 53 others was started for the offence of murdering the forest guard. Lakshman Naik was sentenced to death by hanging, and 10 persons to transportation for life. The latter were later acquitted by the High Court.

The second story of the unprovoked shooting at Pappadahandi is astounding. In the first flash of the August Movement, there was a big gathering of about 6 to 8 thousand persons, under the leadership of Shri Madhava Pradhani and other Congress leaders, which marched into a procession to the village of Dabugam in the centre of the Taluk. As soon as the procession reached a narrow bridge on Pappadahandi river a police party in batches attacked the processionists. The police *lathi* charged and began indiscriminate firing. In this attack 19 persons died, 100 were injured, 140 were arrested. A conspiracy case was started against Congressmen.

### ORISSA 'BELSEN' CAMP

The wanton killing of men through neglect and callousness reached its climax in the death of fifty political prisoners in the Koraput Jail. Politicals were treated with a vindictiveness known to the Nazis only. In a small cell many politicals were huddled up, reducing them to the point of suffocation.

#### 2 - BALASORE DISTRICT

Arrests	...	more than 300
Detentions	..	250

Firings	...	at 3 places
Deaths	...	42
Wounded	..	270
Collective fines	...	Rs. 6,000

Three-fourths of the population of district Balasore rose in revolt after the arrest of the Congress leaders. All the schools and colleges remained closed, liquor-shops and courts were picketed and processions were taken out. The particular feature of the Movement in district Balasore was that the *zamindars* were attacked, but they managed to repel the attacks of the mob with the help of the Muslims. For instance, the village Ahiyas saved their lives and property with the help of the Muslims.

### THE PROGRESS OF THE MOVEMENT

The Movement became very violent in district Balasore in the second-half of September, when wires were cut at many places, government institutions were attacked, bungalows were burnt, and bridges were destroyed. Many acts of violence against government servants and local zamindars were committed in the district, particularly in the jurisdiction of Dhamnagar and Kharia police stations. 6 persons entered the court-room of the sub-Divisional office, Balasore, and tore the records before they could be stopped. *Chaukidars* were assaulted and their uniforms were burnt. On receiving the information that a mob headed by Sjt. Murlidhar Panda was assaulting the government officials, and forcing the Mahajans to part with their paddy and distribute it amongst the people, a police party set out to arrest them. At Katasahi, 8 miles from Bhadrak, on the morning of the 22nd September, the police party met a violent mob of about 4,000 men, led by Murlidhar Panda. The mob adopted a defiant attitude and attacked the police party. The Sub-Inspector and some constables were injured. The police party opened fire. 35 rounds were fired; 6 persons were killed, and 5 injured, of whom 2 subsequently died in the hospital. On the following day, Murlidhar Panda gave himself up to the police, evidently to save the villagers from government repression.

On the 23rd September, in Kharia Police Station, a mob escured a prominent local 'agitator' who had been arrested by the Police, and some members of the police

party were injured in the encounter. Later, on the 25th, when another police party went to arrest the leaders connected with the occurrence of the 23rd, a mob of some 500 persons assembled at Khairadihi and refused to hand over the accused. In spite of persuasion and parleying the mob became violent and attempted to surround the police party with the object of overwhelming it. The police opened fire, but no casualties were reported.

### THE ERAM FIRING

A mob surrounded the godown of the *zamindar* of Fram. He called the police to his assistance. On the 28th September, a Deputy Superintendent of Police, with an Inspector, a sub-Inspector, and 18 armed constables, left Basudebpur Police Station for Eram in order to effect certain important arrests. The *chukidars* carrying the kit of the armed reserve were assaulted and the kit was seized by the mob. The police party proceeded to rescue the kit and, while advancing through the village, were surrounded by a mob of four to five thousand people in an open space. The mob was declared to be an unlawful assembly and was asked to disperse, but it grew more excited, brandished *lathis*, and began to close in on the Police. It was then about 6.30 P. M. and the police opened fire. As it was dark and the crowd was still threatening, the Police retired into a pucca building belonging to the local *zamindar*. As the night advanced the mob gradually dispersed. On the following morning, 15 dead bodies were found. It is understood, however, that all the injured, and some of the dead, were removed by the mob, and it is therefore impossible to give the exact figure. The official report shows that between 25 and 30 persons were killed, and 40 to 50 injured.

### ORISSA FIRING ENQUIRY COMMITTEE

According to the Associated Press the Government of Orissa issued the following communique on setting up enquiry Committee on the massacre of Eram.

In the Government communique dated October 6 it was stated that "the large number of casualties caused when a police party was forced to fire at Eram (in the Distt. of Balasore) on Sept. 26 had attracted the notice of the Provincial Government and was receiving their attention. It is hereby announced that with the approval

of the Government Mr. E. C. Ahsorge, Revenue Commissioner and E. A. O. Perkin, Inspector General of Police, will shortly proceed to hold a joint enquiry. Mr. C. S. Jha, I. C. S. has been deputed by the Government as Secretary for the purpose of the enquiry." No useful purpose was served by such an enquiry. The criminals were allowed to go scotfree. At Damnagar also, police opened fire on a peaceful assembly of the people, killing 8 persons at the spot, wounding 40 and arresting 40. Kalli Mahalik, who received three wounds on his face, spoke these last words: "Brothers, do not worry. I will soon be reborn in Independent India."

### AN INTERESTING INCIDENT

The public officials were in the grip of a soul-moving fear of the Jap attack on the district. They were very panicky and busy in saving their lives, quite oblivious to the fact that they were paid servants of the people. One day it so happened that some combustible material was used in a marriage-party just to create fun. When it exploded, the police superintendent began to tremble in his shoes, believing it to be a bomb explosion. He at once changed his European dress and put on a *dhoti*.

Afraid of mob fury, he and another official boarded a steamer, and crossed the river Vaitarini. Some Congress men assured them of their safety and they returned. The following day, to the utter surprise of the people, when a resolution condemning the arrest of the leaders was being discussed, these officials were enthusiastic speakers in favour of the resolution.

### 3-CUTTOCK DISTRICT

Firing	24, rounds
Deaths	...
Wounded	...
Collective Fine	Rs. 8,000

Cuttack is the central district of the Province. It is in this district that the capital of the province is situated. Therefore, the people of this district are very much politically conscious. When the news of the arrest of the Congress leaders reached the district, and when the important leaders of Orissa and of this district were arrested, the people of the district expressed their resentment in

more than one manner. Everywhere markets were closed and protest meetings were held.

### STUDENTS' ROLE

Students of the district, true to their noble traditions proved their ability to organise freedom movements in 1942. Local high schools, the Orissa School of Engineering at Cuttock, and the Ravanshaw College were closed for a number of days, and the students of these and other institutions speeded up the movement, led the masses, and adopted both violent and non-violent methods for paralysing the administration. Where they failed to cajole, coax and persuade the officials to resign, they did not feel any scruples in using force, compelling the officials to participate in the movement. On the 12th August, girls of the Ravanshaw College observed *hartal*. A clerk of the institution resigned. On the 13th the students were warned that if they failed to attend the college within three days their names would be struck off the rolls, and all "freeships" would be stopped. But the students refused to comply with the order. On the 14th some 500 students attacked the police office, burnt all papers, held a protest meeting and dispersed before the police arrived. Even Muslim students observed *hartal*. The students of Cuttock Muslim High School stayed out of their institution for a number of days. So great was the role played by the students that the authorities used to call it the students' movement.

### SABOTAGE AND DISLOCATION

Not satisfied with the speed and scope of the movement, which was hitherto confined to protest meetings, *hurtals* and peaceful demonstrations, the people of the district, often led by the youth, embarked upon the so-called "second phase" of the movement. They attacked the police *thanas* and other institutions. A number of outlying government buildings, which included the Inspection bungalows at Ersama the Tahsil Office at Jagatsinghpur, the rest house and the Revenue Offices at Sahaura and the constables' barracks, and records of the police station and the post-office at Ersama, were burnt. A number of incidents of cutting of telegraph and telephone wires were reported. The cuttock General Hospital was attacked on the 8th September. Dresses of the *Chaukidars* were burnt. On the 16th August,

when the police constables were escorting the arrested Congress leaders to Jeypur sub-Division, a mob, 3,000 strong, stopped the police party, and despite the persuasion of the Congress leaders to the contrary, attacked the police party with *lathis* and other weapons. One D.S.P. and two constables were wounded. The Magistrate ordered firing. 28 rounds were fired, as a result of which one person was killed, and 12 wounded.

## REPRESSION

All the important Congress workers and leaders were arrested, including Gopa Dass, Acharya Harihar, and others. All the Congress bodies were declared illegal. The Congress offices were locked and taken possession of by the police. The property of prominent congress leaders was confiscated. Section 144 Cr. P. C. was promulgated in Cuttack on the 10th August. Bholanand Bal Sewa Ashram at Cuttack was closed by the police. The Manager of Gandhi Centre was arrested and Rahuna Sadhan Kutir was confiscated. Collective fines, amounting to Rs. 5,000 and 3000 were imposed on the inhabitants of a number of villages in the Ersama and Tirtol police station respectively, for their alleged complicity in acts of hooliganism. The Governor issued a special order directing the authorities to exempt the Muslim population of these villages from paying fines. Thus deliberate efforts were made by the government to array the Muslims against the insurgents.

Despite the various measures adopted by the authorities to suppress the movement, the people of the district remained uncowed, and the movement kept engrossing the people for many more months. They continued giving a headache to the authorities in one way or the other until all the prominent leaders of the country were released.

## 4—PURI DISTRICT

Puri has its own importance for the Hindu public of India, because it is in this district that one of the four holiest shrines of the Hindus is situated. People go to this place from far and near every year. This has given considerable all-India outlook to the people of Puri, and has developed in them a robust sense of patriotism and love for the motherland.

As elsewhere, when the Congress leaders were arrested, the whole district of Puri was stirred up, and the people decided to abolish the slur of slavery from the fair face of the motherland.

### STUDENTS' ROLE

Students belonging to Delang *thana* as well as the students of Puri Sanskrit College, took a prominent part in the movement. Out of 250 students of the said college only 6 attended classes for some days, and gradually they also began to absent themselves. Students of Edward High School, and other institutions of Puri, were on strike for a number of days. A mammoth meeting was held on the 17th August, in which speeches were made condemning the British. The D. S. P. and S. D. C. were present but no one was arrested.

### ATTACK ON THE *THANA*

The people of Puri were comparatively peaceful, but a serious incident took place on the 16th September, when a mob of about 500 held a meeting and decided to persuade the local police officers at Nimapara to non-cooperate with the government by giving up their jobs. In pursuance of this decision the mob rushed into the *thana*, and attempted to take possession of it by force. They threw brick bats, as a result of which some members of the police staff received injuries. The police then opened fire. Altogether 11 rounds were fired to disperse the mob. One man was killed and 11 others injured.

### 5 - DISTRICT GANJAM

The people of Ganjam district had throughout remained peaceful. They expressed their disapproval of the arrest of the leaders in a very peaceful and disciplined manner. Students of Maharaja's college at Parlakimedi left college. The police arrested 6 students. Members of the War Board resigned on the 14th August. On the 15th August about 500 students of the Chhatrapur High School boycotted the institution.

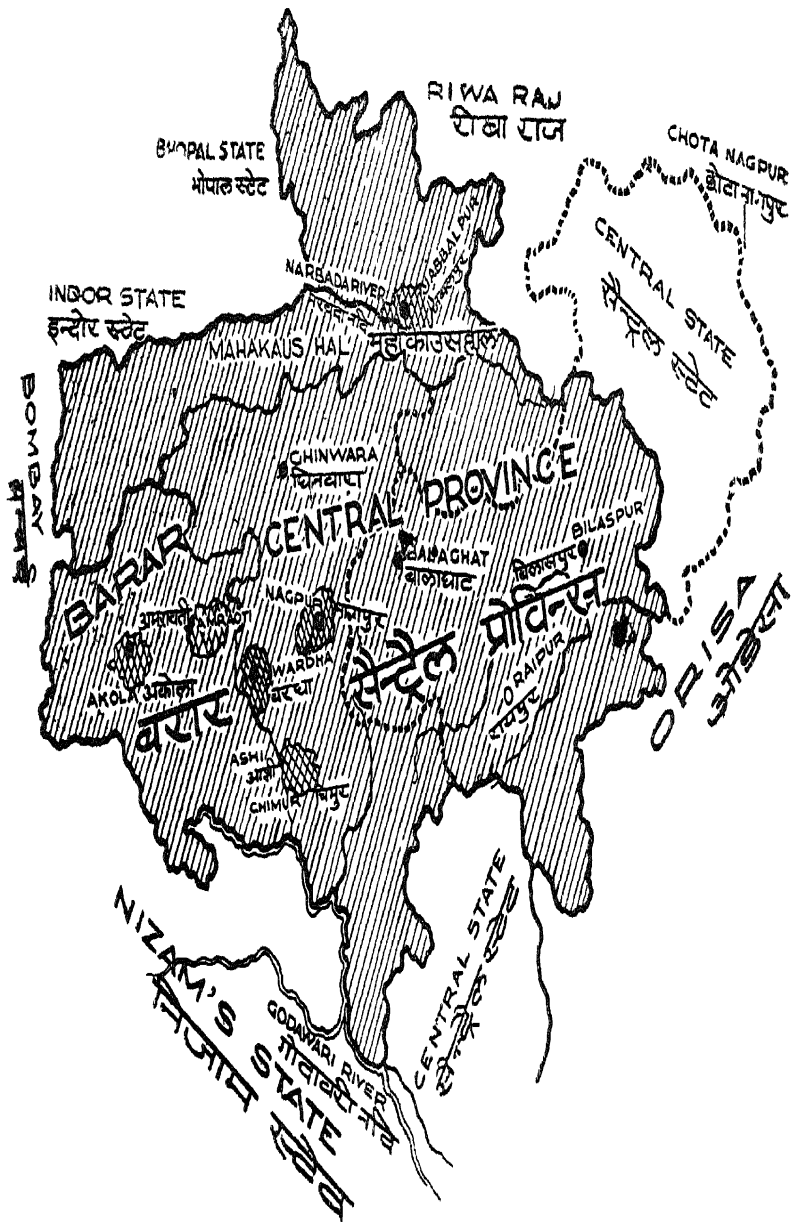
About 1000 persons gathered at Mathili and attacked a liquor shop. They raided the state office. The magistrate gave a warning, but the people did not pay any heed to it. They rushed to the *thana* and asked the police officials to quit. They threatened complete des-

truction of the *thana*. When the police personnel refused to fall in line with the mob they were attacked. Many police constables were wounded. The magistrate ordered firing. 18 rounds were fired. 4 persons died at the spot and 3 were wounded.

#### 6—SAMBHALPUR DISTRICT

No untoward incident occurred in this District, though the people of the District were not mere passive spectators to this grand national drama. They did express their indignation at the arrest of their beloved leaders, but they behaved in a perfectly peaceful manner. Their war against the British was conducted on perfectly non-violent lines. They merely non-cooperated with the authorities. For this a number of arrests were made. A police force sealed the local office of the Congress and took away the cyclostyle machine. Beyond this, the authorities did not lay their hands upon either the Congress or personal property of the people, or on their persons.





## CHAPTER X

### CENTRAL PROVINCES

Convictions	...	5,060.
Detentions	...	3,226
Firing	...	70 places
No. of persons killed	...	345
No. of Persons severely wounded	about	161
Collective fines	...	Rs. 2,18,100
Demonstrations	...	178
Government Buildings attacked	...	62
Places of severe repression	...	43

### SOCIO-ECONOMIC BACKGROUND.

The Central Provinces and Berar comprise a great triangular country, mid-way between Bengal and Bombay. Their area is 1,31,557 sq. miles., of which 80,766 is British territory proper, 17,808 (viz. Berar) held on perpetual lease by H.E.H. the Nizam, and the remainder held by feudatory chiefs. The population is 16,822, 584 in C.P. British Districts, and Berar. The Central Provinces may roughly be divided into the tracts of upland, with the two intervening ones of plain country. In the North West, the Vindhyan plateau is a broken country, covered with poor and stunted forests. Below its precipitous slopes stretches the rich wheat growing country of the Nerbuda valley. Then comes the high Satpura plateau, characterised by forest-covered hills, and deep water-cut ravines. Its hills decline into the Nagpur plain, whose broad stretches of "deep" black cotton soil make it one of the most important cotton tracts of India, and the wealthiest part of the C.P. proper. The Eastern half of the plain lies in the valley of the Wainganga and is mainly a rice growing country. Its numerous irrigation tanks have given it the name of the "lake country" of Nagpur. Farther east is the far-reaching rice country of Chhattisgarh, in the Mahanadi basin. The south-east of the C.P. is

again mountainous, containing 24,000 square miles of forest and precipitous ravines, and mostly inhabited by Jungle tribes. The States of Bastar and Kanker lie in this region. Berar lies to the south-west of the C.P., and its chief characteristic is its rich black cotton soil plains.

The population of the province is a comparatively new community. Before the advent of Aryans, the whole of it was peopled by the Gonds and other primitive tribes, and these aboriginal inhabitants fared better with the Aryans than their like in the rest of India, because of the rugged nature of their country. With lapse of time there set in a continuous stream of immigrants and the primitive people were thrown to the forests. Thus the community has many racial complexes, a combination of cultured and primitive ideas. Those who came later, are divided on linguistic basis. Hindi, brought in by the Hindustani speaking peoples of the North, prevails in the North and east; Marathi, in Berar, west and the centre of the Central Provinces. Hindi is spoken by 50% of the population, and is the *lingua franca*; Marathi by 31% and Gondi by 7% of the population.

The Congress has divided the Province into three provinces on linguistic basis. The Hindi speaking people form Mahakoshal, the Marathi speaking, marathe C.P., while Vidarbha is a third province, which has a great historical tradition behind it. These racial and linguistic differences have played a vital role in the politics of the province, and have sometimes worked for its political degeneration the discussion of which does not form the theme of this chapter. The Marhattas, although numerically not very strong, wield a very great influence on the day to day life of the province. Almost all the services are manned by them, but the doggedness, hardihood, grit and audacity which has characterised them since the days of the Great Shivaji, have also made them valiant soldiers in the freedom's battle. They are instinctively and temperamentally suited for guerilla warfare, The Movement of 1942 in C.P. bears ample evidence of their historical qualities.

## NATURE OF THE MOVEMENT

Let us freely confess that the movement was not a great success in this Province. Many factors were responsible for this. The mountainous nature of the

province, absence of facilities for transport and communications, the quick and sudden round up of all the important workers of the province, heartless repressive measures adopted by the bureaucracy, and such other reasons account for it. Still, the Province as a whole can well be proud of the brave people of Nagpur, where the Movement was intense, sustained, concentrated and vigorous; of Ashti and Chimur, which exacted for themselves countrywide sympathies and admiration, and also the people of Wardha, Yawali and Binoda.

The movement in this province, as elsewhere, started with protest meetings and demonstrations. Everywhere the people expressed their bitterness against the British, who had assaulted the nation by arresting the Congress leaders, in some way or the other. Since this province has been the abode of Mahatma Gandhi for the last many years the people remained perfectly non-violent, despite police excesses. There were no doubt some unfortunate lapses, for which, however, the people are not to blame. Too much of repression breeds violence. The people of this Province, due to the difficulties mentioned above, especially geographical, were not very much organised. They generally took to guerilla warfare, and some of them went underground.

Whatever be the record of the people of this province during the great days of 1942 and after, it is not easy to forget Chimur and Ashti. Every man and woman in those towns proved a martyr. In that rank comes that young boy of 18 belonging to Nagpur, named Shankar, who was the first to mount the gallows. The spirit of that great *mantra*, "quit India" had gone deep in the hearts of the Indians. The movement that was started in its full vigour by the people of Ashti and Chimur has left behind echoes of both sorrow and joy; of sorrow because many youngmen and women fell victim to the police excesses, many were transported for life and many hanged.

## THE MOVEMENT AND THE MAGISTRACY

The Magistracy, though not very independently functioning during those days, freely condemned the dishonouring of women, burning of the villages, and indiscriminately killing of the people. For many days the authorities did not allow any outsiders to get into these affected areas, and see things for themselves. Newspapers were

not allowed to publish anything with regard to these happenings. This method of terrorising the people was adopted not only to over-awe the villagers, but also to curb the spirit of the people. Even the sub-Divisional Magistrate who gave his verdict against the leaders of the people had to observe that the police did what they had no power to do. The High Court Judge reviewing the Chimur incident said, "I have detected few signs of, any genuine remorse amongst the residents of Chimoor and the crime has hardly received the condemnation there or else where that one might have expected." The Judge obviously felt sorry that people were in repentent mood when they killed the Circle Inspector of Police, forgetting that he and his like had not only dishonoured and humiliated the people of Chimur, but the whole nation had received a deep wound on its heart.

### PROF. BHANSALI'S FAST

Professor Bhansali had declared, "No nation can achieve freedom which suffers outrages on its women and receives them lying down. We must be up and fight against a Government intoxicated with the lust of power. God gives the upmost to those who fight for their honour. "His voice went unheard. Even Mr. Aney's intervention in the matter did not improve the situation. Many a times Prof. Bhansali was jailed and then brought back to Sevagram, but that brave patriot and huminitarian persisted in his demand for an enquiry into these shameful affairs. Declaring his decision of starting a hunger-strike, Prof. Bhansali made following demands from Mr. Aney.

- (1) Soldiers and police should not be allowed to commit excesses hereafter.
- (2) The atrocities being committed in jails should be stopped, and those that occurred in the past should be investigated.
- (3) Excesses committed by the Police and the Military in the rural areas must be investigated.
- (4) If Mr. Aney is unable to get these reliefs for the public, he should resign.

His fast evoked universal sympathy's and the attention of the civilised world was focussed on the C.P. For many days this Province prominently figured in almost all the important newspapers of the land. and everywhere

even in the most modest homes, Ashti and Chimur became the topics of family talks.

### STUDENTS' ROLE

Like their fraternity in other provinces the students of the Central Provinces took a prominent part in the Movement. They organised the *prabhat pheries*, held protest meetings, took out processions, marched to the *thanas* and the courts to hoist the national flag, distributed literature regarding the movement, went to the villages, explained to the people the so-called Congress Programme, and incited them to "do or die" for the nations cause. In short the students were always in the front, on the rear, everywhere challenging the British either to face the Nation-on-revolt or quit. Most of them went underground and some freely took to sabotage and dislocation activities. Students of Nagpur University and Sekseria Commerce College of Wardha played a prominent part in the movement. The contribution of the students of Jubbulpore in the freedom's battle was by no means insignificant.

### REPRESSION

The shameful affairs of Chimur, Ashti Yawale and Binoda will be dealt with in detail in the following pages. It is sufficient to mention here that the measures adopted by the authorities to quell the movement can well be compared with those adopted by the Nazis, Fascist and other totalitarian states in putting down opposition, and muffling the voice of dissension. A veritable reign of terror began in several parts of the province after the wholesale arrest of Congress leaders and workers, and their detention without trial of any sort. Access to some of the regions of the province had been rendered difficult, if not impossible, by prohibitive orders or harassment of visitors. It is often argued that the Germans of the Japanese, to judge their conduct elsewhere, would have acted in a worse manner. It is to be remembered, however, that the British have to deal here with people who are peaceful by temperament, and are unarmed, and who have been trained for non-violence. People of the Central Provinces were least prepared for a violent revolt, but when the Government was bent upon obliterating the freedom-loving people, the latter fell like hungry lions on the aggressor. Still, it was to the great credit of the

people that violence on their part was sporadic, unplanned, and unintentional. As against this the British, by way of reprisals, sought to subject the whole population to systematic terrorisation. Menfolk were arrested *en masse* and their women were molested. Villages were burnt; men, women, and children were burnt alive; heavy collective fines were imposed on the people; newspapers were censored and gagged, public men were not allowed to see and to speak for the bleeding humanity in the towns and the villages of the Central Provinces. There was no end to beating, kicking, dragging and committing unnatural offences. Barbarous methods were used in realising the fines, and those who could not pay were not only tortured but also robbed of every thing they possessed.

### NAGPUR

The Marathi speaking four districts of C.P. constitute what is called the Nagpur Province. These districts are Bhandara, Nagpur, Wardha and Chanda.

#### 1—BHANDARA DISTRICT

Detentions	...	194
Convictions	...	293
Places of firing	...	3
Deaths	...	9
Injured	...	9
Collective fines	...	Rs. 1,500
Demonstrations	...	12

There was a general strike on the 9th, 10th, 11th, 12th, 13th and 14th of August. On the 14th, after the flag salutation ceremony, Chaudhry Tanbaji Naik and four others were arrested. The public started brick-battling, while the police opened fire, resulting in 6 dead and 25 wounded. Telephone and telegraph wires were cut. On the 15th at Tumsur, Section 144 Cr. P.C. was imposed. The Congress office and houses of the Congress workers were searched.

### BHANDARA TOWN

On the 14th, under the Presidentship of Prabhavati Jagatdar, a protest meeting was held. Fire was opened on the peaceful people. Three persons died, as also a cow

standing nearly. On the 15th, the students brought out a huge procession.

### MUHARI

*Hartals* were declared and protest demonstrations were held. A collective fine of Rs. 1500 was imposed. A bridge was destroyed.

### SHIHORA

On the 9th a public meeting was held. On the 10th a general strike was declared in schools. Bulletins were distributed. On the 20th, the Congress Office was locked and Sher Mohammed Bahi was arrested. The National flag was dishonoured at Karmvir Chowk and then burnt. 13 workers were arrested and humiliated by way of reprisal by the police.

### GONDIA TALUKA

On the 9th there was a general strike and a procession was taken out in the night. Gandhiji's message was read to the people. On the 10th almost all the Congress workers, including Kesheo Rao Ingle, Shri Panna Lal Dube, Shri Sukh Deoji Agrawal, and Shri Chandra Kesh, were arrested. Thereafter, the police raided the Congress Office and sealed the lock. Sensation prevailed in the City. At 4.0' clock a meeting was held and 17 persons were arrested there. Processions were taken out continuously for 4 days. Many people were beaten. Military demonstrations were held to suppress the movement. Even then, congress posters were displayed on prominent places in the city. The movement was completely brought under control towards the end of August. There were 293 convictions under various sections and 194 persons were interned.

### 2—NAGPUR DISTRICT

Detentions	...	109
Convictions	...	571
Government buildings attacked		14
Firing	...	at 2 places
Deaths	...	2
Injured	...	2

Collective fines	...	Rs. 53, 500
Demonstrations	...	27

### SAWNER TALUKA

Meetings were held at many places on the 12th explaining the Congress message. Rails were removed at Keloth on the 15th, and the station was also burnt. The soldiers strayed into villages, beat and humiliated the people, and dishonoured the women.

### KHAPA

Records of the post-office, *thana* revenue officer and patwari were burnt. Municipal Office and the Ranger's Office were damaged, involving a loss of Rs. 50,000. Railway line was breached. Wires were cut. Bridges were destroyed and the European Bungalow burnt. The Military now started taking revenge on the 16th, by looting the shops, tormenting the workers and beating women and children. A collective fine of Rs. 10,000 was imposed.

### SHABENER

Furniture of the railway station, railway workshop, and the kerosene oil depot were looted, and the Inspection Bungalow burnt. The Police opened fire killing Puja Ram Changar, and wounding two others. Public whipping was resorted to.

### UMRETH TALUKA

On the 9th and 10th a search was made in the Congress Office, and the Hindustan Red Army. Number of arrests were made. A Dak-Bungalow and a Kanzi-house at Panchgaon, were burnt. At Bela *thana* Government officials were boycotted. Records of post-office and *thana* were burnt. Guns were snatched from the soldiers. Office of the Revenue Officer was burnt. 11 arrests were made and a collective fine of Rs. 1000 was imposed.

### RAMTEK TALUKA

The Station was burnt, an engine was destroyed, the police men were forced to put on Khaddar, and the national flag was hoisted on the Kutcheri. Records of criminal courts were burnt. The Tehsildar was attacked.

The Treasury was looted of Rs. 10,70,000. On the 16th, the military came to subdue the people. The Village was surrounded from all sides. Public whipping was resorted to. Women, for fear of being dishonoured, did not move out. 175 arrests were made. A collective fine of Rs. 30,000 was imposed. One person died in the jail.

Records of the patwari, revenue officer, and gram panchayats were destroyed at Tharsa, Garegaon, Chinchra, Maudha, Mahatula and Kodamethi, and arrests were made in all these villages. At Maudha the police *thana* was burnt. The personnel of Hindustan Red Army caught hold of Sheikh Daud, a Police constable and shots were fired at other constables also. Four guns, 89 cartridges, police uniforms and handcuffs were snatched away from the police.

### GUMGAON TALUKA

On the 13th, on the arrest of the Secretary, Congress Committee, and the vice-President, a mob of 3000 persons fell upon the police to secure the release of their leader. The *Daroga* fled away. 2 constables were severely wounded, who were later treated by the villagers themselves. They were later on restored to the *thana*. Post office and Kanzi house were burnt. At Hingna, posters were distributed. At Baroda the papers of the patwari were burnt and a bridge was damaged. Similar things happened at Pardhi, where some military ration lorries were looted and damaged. At Kharsauli the *Daroga* was beaten and forced to take off his uniform. The Nagpur Central Jail politicals were subjected to *lathi* charge as a reprisal. Firing was resorted to on the people in the taluka, resulting in one death. 160 persons were sentenced, and 13 were detained. A collective fine of Rs. 5000 was imposed.

### NAGPUR CITY

Detentions	...	153
Convictions	...	194
Government buildings attacked		14
Places of firing	...	1
Deaths	...	300
Demonstrations	...	4

During the movement of 1942, Nagpur City played a historical role. More than at any other time, Nagpur

proved that it was the real capital of the famous Bhonsley. On the 9th and 10th August huge meetings were held in Nagpur and every leader voted to keep the fire of freedom burning. On the 11th August the whole of Nagpur was ablaze.

The Governor of C.P. said that "for 72 hours, the Nagpurians ruled Nagpur." Of course he said that 'rascals' in Nagpur ruled. If he, as a lover of freedom, were to rule England, and be called a rascal for that, then indeed we may not feel ashamed of applying that word to ourselves. Ruling our own land does not make us rascals. On the 10th, under the presidentship of Shri Ruiker, a huge public meeting was held at Chitnish Park. The Magistrate and S.P., with a posse of police, were present. On the 11th, under the aegis of Hindu Mahasabha, another public meeting was held in Venkatesh Theatre. It was resolved that the strike in the schools, colleges and mills must be continued. On the 12th the students took out a procession, and moving round the city, reached the court. They exhorted the lawyers and government officials to cease functioning. Tri-colour was hoisted on the court-building. Firing was resorted to by the police, and later on tear-gas was used. Two persons received deep injuries.

### SABOTAGE ACTIVITIES

The Nagpur City General Post-Office was burnt. The Government Rationing Godown and the cloth stock were looted. All the public buildings were raided. Treasuries were looted. Electric bulbs were destroyed. Telephone and telegraph wires were cut. Grog-shops and fire-brigades were burnt. All the police stations in the city were either taken possession of or burnt.

### REPRISAL

On the 14th Curfew Order was promulgated in the city. A Military parade was held in the city. Whoever happened to meet the eye of the military was at once shot dead. Those who were looking through their windows were also made a target. Many were wounded. Indeed, the military was gambling with the innocent lives of the people. They broke open the houses of the people. Women were molested and raped; and respectable citizens were dragged out and forced to cleanse the streets. Shri Shankar Kunbi, belonging to Nawabpura Circle, was hanged. 32 persons were killed by firing, and above 300

persons were wounded. About 1000 persons were arrested and many were released later after paying some money as bribe.

A Jhanda Satyagraha was started by the citizens. As a protest against Government prohibition to take out the flag they went through the streets of the city with the flag, got beating from the police and the military, and went to Jail. But the process was repeated time and again and the satyagraha continued for some days.

### 3—WARDHA DISTRICT

Detentions	...	137
Convictions	...	434
Government buildings attacked		2
Places of Firing	...	3
Deaths	...	7
Injured	...	20
Collective fines	...	Rs. 40,000
Demonstrations	...	13

### WARDHA TALUKA

Wardha has been the un-official capital of India. because there lives a saint, a philosopher, a spiritual leader, an ascetic and a mystic who is always in loin-cloth, and yet remains the uncrowned King of India. The people of Wardha, when they came to know of the arrest of the soul of Wardha, went mad. But they could never be violent, because in every fibre of their being the philosophy of non-violence had been permeated. When Shri Shiv Raj Churiwala returned from Bombay, people flocked to him in their tens and thousands, to listen to what Gandhiji said on 'quit India' resolution. Shri Churi-walla was speaking to the people in the Gandhi Chowk, when the Police arrived and warned the people either to disperse, or face *lathi*-charge and firing. The people raised slogans of 'quit India' and '*Inqilab Zindabad*', and shouted an emphatic 'No' to the Police. Shri Shiv Raj Churiwalla continued speaking. Firing was opened, killing one youngman of 28, named Janglu, a father of 3 children and the only son of his father. Many persons were wounded.

The violent passions of the people were about to be

unleashed but then Shri Churiwalla harangued to them to put to test the teachings of their beloved Mahatma. His speech, breathing the spirit of the highest type of humanity, is worth recording. He said, "Why do you dishonour Bapu's abode? What will he say when he will come back? Do not forget non-violence. Greatest power is latent in non-violence. Be patient and peaceful. Not one Janglu, but many of his type will be killed." The people swallowed their anger and remained non-violent. Mahatmaji, when he returned, visited the spot at which Janglu attained martyrdom, and placed there a wreath.

### ARRESTS.

Binobha Bhawe, Dada Dharma Dhikari, Kishori Lal Agrawala, Acharya Nayakam, and Shivraj Churiwala were arrested. The public was horror-stricken. The students started writing on walls, and pasting handbills. Bulletins exhorting the people to 'do or die' began to come in every house. Section 144 was promulgated. The town was placed under military control. Even innocent people who stirred out of their houses were beaten.

One day a motor full of sepoy with *lathis* in their hands arrived. The town was presenting a deserted appearance. Whoever crossed them was beaten. An Ahir was beaten to unconsciousness. Some shop-keepers were also subjected to similar treatment. But the National flag continued flying. Small children continued singing, "*Shan na iski jane paave, chahe jan bhale hi jaave*".

### DEWALI.

A procession was taken out. *Lathi* charge was made. Post Office was burnt and police constables were wounded. A collective fine of Rs. 4,000/- was imposed. Letter-boxes were damaged, records of post offices and *thanas* were burnt, rails were removed, wires were cut at Paunar Barbari, Barur, Dahegaon, Aji and Khargana. An unsuccessful attempt was also made to derail a train of Barbari.

### HINGANGHAT TALUKA

The students and the public of the *taluka* continued taking out processions and organising protest meetings and demonstrations. In all 12 arrests were made.

### ARBI TALUKA.

Procession was taken out on the 10th August. The

Congress Office was locked by the police. Shops were picketed, and *hartals* were organised. 16 arrests were made. The people were flogged.

### ASHTI INCIDENT

On the 12th August, when the people of Ashti heard the unpleasant news of the arrest of their leaders, they formed a procession and marched towards the *thana* to hoist the National Flag. Women were on the fore. The procession stopped in front of the *thana*. Foul, obscene and abusive language was used by the policemen. But the procession continued marching forward. The police made a *lathi*-charge and then resorted to firing. Many men and women were wounded. The horrible sight sent the blood up in the veins of the youngmen. They fell upon the policemen. Six processionists and 5 police men, including Ram Nath Misra, the sub-Inspector, were killed. The police fled away. The people hoisted the national flag on the *thana*.

At the dead of night, British soldiers entered the village, and beat the people. The next day they were filed and made to stand in the scorching heat of the noon, and some of them were fired upon and killed. They were not given food or water. In the evening they were herded together, like animals, in a small room and kept there for full one month. The Military remained in the village. Women were molested, and raped. Their menfolk having been removed and jailed, a reign of pillage, destruction, loot and plunder was established. Nobody was allowed to visit the village to sympathise with the villagers. The soldiers played with the honour, chastity and modesty of women. 6 persons were sentenced to death in the bargain, and later on when protests were made all over the country, condemning the decision of the court, the death penalty was reduced to a sentence of transportation for life in the case of four; two persons were hanged.

### 3—CHANDA DISTRICT

Detentions	...	78
Convictions	...	245
Government buildings attacked		5
Firing	' ...	1
Deaths	...	3

Injured	10
Collective fines	... Rs. 1,00,000
Demonstrations	... 12

All over the district meetings were organised condemning the bureaucracy's attack on the Congress, and, for that matter, on the nation as a whole. Processions were taken out shouting anti-British slogans. Demonstrations were held before the *thanas*, *Kutcheries* and other public buildings. Attempts were made at many places like Armoha, Chirauli, Devsara, Baraura, Chikani, Mathheri and Chanda, to set all the records of government offices on fire. Many arrests were made all over the district. People were insulted and beaten. Villages were burnt and looted. Women were dishonoured, and many people were released after paying illegal gratifications.

### CHIMUR INCIDENT

Chimur is a prosperous little town, with a population of 6000 people, in the Chanda District of the Central Provinces. Peaceful meetings were held and processions were being taken out since the 11th August. It was Nagypanchami on the 16th of August. A *Prabhat phery* went round the village, about 400 women and 100 children participating. Every one was perfectly non-violent and disciplined. All the roads and tracks leading to the village were blocked by the police. The procession was stopped and firing was opened. People sat where they stood but the firing was ceaseless. Some women and children fell victim to this atrocity. The public went mad with rage, and wanted revenge and recrimination. They attacked the police and forced the policemen to be on their heels. Five Govt. servants were killed at the spot. The people knew that the bureaucracy would wreak vengeance on their side. They breached the roads and barricaded them by felling trees along the roadside. Most of the people had left the village by the time the military reached.

Almost all the male members of the village were arrested. The D. M. of Chanda was responsible for giving such an ugly turn to the situation. He wrote to the Government that since a large scale and armed rebellion had broken out in the Jungle of Chimur a regiment of white soldiers, fully equipped, should be sent to reinforce the armed police.

On the 9th a special train reached the station of Arora with 200 white and 50 Indian soldiers fully equipped

with military buses for their transport to Chimur-30 miles off. The District Magistrate was mad with rage and revenge when he reached Chimur. The terror-stricken people, big or small, hid themselves in their houses, either in big *wadas* or in cottages, and barred the doors from inside. There was none to be found in the streets and the whole village appeared to be deserted. The D.M. took some troops with guns and musket and went to *widas* of big persons first, and then to the houses of others. He broke them open and handed out every male member, and got them beaten and arrested, excluding only old and young. About 128 arrests were made. The soldiers were said to be the 'guest of the villagers', according to the D.M. The villagers were asked to feed these "invited guests". The police broke open the stores of those who were under arrest. Then the police poured into the military camps cart-loads of big copper and brass utensils for cooking, bags of sugar, wheat, rice, fuel, tins of kerosene, *ghae*, oil etc. The village was then systematically plundered. Houses of the well-to-do and rich men were entered, and safes containing gold and silver rifled. Silk *sarees* were torn and scattered, or handed over to the Indian soldiers and the police. They amused themselves with harmoniums and used kitchens as latrines. Women were raped, but in many cases the women linked themselves together hand in hand, and put up successful resistance. But wherever they remained alone shocking outrages were committed on them. There are reports of rapes on women in advanced pregnancy, those newly delivered or those in menses. A girl of tender years was strangled. This does not mean that there are hundreds of such cases, or that over 50% of the female population was molested, as the rumours go. But such cases did occur and in good many numbers. They can only be traced if a responsible non-official enquiry is held.

This state of things reigned for two days. At last an old lady, Dadi Bai Begde, took courage and somehow reached the D.M. through the guns and bayonets of the patrolling guards. She narrated to him the whole situation and asked if there were no ladies in his house. The D.M. is said to have told her that their husbands, sons, and brothers had invited the military, and it was the natural outcome of that; still he would enquire into the matter and give them protection. He thereupon called the military and police together and told them not to trouble the womenfolk. This helped to quieten matters to a

certain extent, but did not go far enough.

In the meantime, the local Government had imposed a collective fine of one lac of rupees on the village and its surroundings. After the departure of the military on the 26th, collection of fine began in earnest and the money was extorted without difficulty from the terrorised womenfolk, the men having either fled or arrested by the police.

Thus the above mentioned three stages of the tyranny, viz. (1) beatings and arrests, (2) looting and plundering, and (3) legalised loot for the collection of fines followed one another. Then came the fourth stage, of the investigation of the offences. During the first three stages no outsider dared to approach the village either through fear or want of proper information. And then, although the Government said that there was no restriction on persons going to Chimur, still any outsider going there was put to hardships and humiliations. The D.M. was managing the situation in such a way that no outsider could go to the village till at least the investigations were over, lest the investigations be "hampered". Thus, the village of Chimur, which came to consist mainly of female population, was cut off from the outside world and remained under the control of the uncultured and uncontrolled police.

### REPRESSION

17 women, who were molested and raped, narrated their own stories to Dr. Moonje. Out of these 17 women 13 were actually raped, some by more than one white soldier, and the rest four were only molested. The women in great agony, gave expression to their desire for revenge, to be taken by their men folk, if God Almighty so willed. About 4000 persons were arrested and some of them were released after sometime when sub-Inspector Bashir Ullah was given bribes. About 75 were convicted; two died in the jail, and 7 out of the jail. 35 people were sentenced to transportation for life. One was convicted for 13 years, 7 for 7 years, 18 for 5 years and 3 for 3 years.

Within two days, Rs. 2,00,000 were realised as collective fines, and high-handedness was practised in realising the fines. One example of such atrocious methods will suffice.

Motichand Nanakchand was fined Rs.10,000. He sent wires to the Governor and the D.C. to say that his shop was already looted to the extent of things worth Rs. 10,000. He then received the following reply from the D. C. :-

"Serious coercive measures will be started tomorrow".

A man's entire property worth Rs. 50,000 was taken away. Another man's entire property worth Rs. 1,800 was taken away. Nuri Bhora was fined Rs. 2,000 and another Muslim Rs. 1,000. Till 3rd September fines amounting to Rs. 85,000 had been realized. Later, in accordance with the Central Government's policy, the fines of the Muslims were remitted.

### AFTERMATH

Prof. Bhansali's hunger-strike evoked countrywide sympathy. Mr. M. S. Aney, then an Executive Councillor, Dr. Moonje, and 3 ladies, Mrs. Dwarika Bai Devaskar, Miss Bimla Bai Abiyankar, and Mrs. Bimla Bai, Despande from Nagpur, and Dr. Mrs. Durga Bai Wazalwar, visited Chimur and prepared their separate reports which read like fiction but are so true and shocking that one's heart is filled with remorse, and tears trickle down in sympathy for the hundreds of men and women who suffered inhuman atrocities at the hands of the British tyrants. The outrages committed by the police and the military are not even enquired into by the Government. The wrong done to innocent men and women of Chimur still remains unrevenged.

### MAHAKAUSHAL

The Hindi-knowing 11 districts of Central provinces have been welded together in a new province, Mahakaushal, by the Congress. The people of this Province after the arrest of the Congress leaders grew restless and became indignant. They brought out processions and staged demonstrations, vehemently criticising the bureaucracy. But the violent passions of the people rose high only after Shri Gulab Singh was killed at Jubbulpore. Thereafter the people of the Provinces freely took to dislocation and sabotage activities.

This Province comprises of 11 districts viz. Baitul, Hoshangabad, Narsinghpur, Khandwa, Mandla, Chindwara, Balaghat, Durg, Raipur, Bilaspur, Sagar, Damoh and Jubbulpore. I shall now try to narrate the story of the movement in Mahakaushal district-wise.

#### 4 - BAITUL

Arrests

...

647

Detentions	...	195
Convictions	...	452
(sentences ranging from 18 months to 20 years of imprisonment.)		
Firings	...	At 3 places
Deaths	...	18 (6 in jail)
Wounded	...	6
Collective fines	...	Rs. 2,400

On the 9th August the office of the District Congress Committee was searched and locked by the police and Shri Balkrishana Patel and Sjt. Beharilal Patel were arrested at Prabat Pattan. The people were infuriated. They hurled stones at the police, and the latter opened fire. One person was killed. Thereafter the post-office was burnt and the *patwari's* record was destroyed. The same incident occurred at Amrawti, Baghaura and Gangauna.

On the 15th August 1000 persons attacked Ranipur *thana* and destroyed everything that it contained. On the 16th the Dharakoh Railway station was attacked by 2500 persons, and burnt. On the 17th, a mob of equal strength uprooted the rails and reached Ghoradungari, where another mob, 20,000 strong, was waiting. The D.C. with a batch of military soldiers, was also present. The leaders set the fire-wood depot ablaze. The D.C. ordered the soldiers to open fire. One person died and 6 were wounded. Many arrests were made.

### AMLA

On the 24th the records of the Revenue Inspector and the *patwari* were burnt. At Naiyya similar things happened. Shri Kela, a prominent worker was beaten and his son was shot dead. On the 25th a grog shop was burnt.

### BAITUL BAZAR

Some unknown person set fire to the local Agriculture College. The culprit could not be traced. A collective fine of Rs. 2000 was imposed.

### REPRESSION

District Baitul was the worst sufferer in Mahakaushal.

The wheel of repression rolled throughout the district and left behind the sorry spectacle of shrieks, groans, tears and blood.

### SABOTAGE

On Itarsi-Nagpur line rails between Dharakoh and Ghoradungari were removed. Wires were cut and attempts were made to derail trains at many places.

#### 5—HOSHANGABAD

Detentions	...	140
Convictions	...	365
Demonstrations	...	7
Government buildings attacked		4
Firings	... at 3 places	
Deaths	...	2
Collective fines	... Rs.	15,000

On the 9th August, there was complete *hartal* throughout the district. Processions were taken out and protest meetings were held. On the 11th attempts were made to burn the police stations at Itarsi. On the 14th, the student workers and citizens of Itarsi brought out a huge procession and proceeded to burn a fire-wood depot at the station. They had to face the armed police. There was regular scuffle between the people and the police. One English sergeant, Circle Inspector and two constables were wounded. Thereafter the police entered houses and beat the inmates. A boy was so severely beaten that he died in the hospital.

#### HOSHANGABAD CITY

The City observed a complete *hartal* and staged peaceful demonstrations. After some days the mob took to wire-cutting. The students had to face three *lathi*-charges. A collective fine of Rs. 5000 was imposed.

#### PIPIRIA

On the 14th a mob, 2500 strong, attacked the Cooperative Bank, destroyed the furniture of the Bank, as well as the records of the Post-office. Some damage was done to the station.

## CHICHALI

Chichali, in the Narsinghpur sub-division, was the village which suffered very cruelly at the hands of the bureaucracy. On the 24th the people, concerned over the fate of the politicians who were rumoured to have been taken to an unknown destination, held a public meeting. The Naib-Tahsildar, Shri Agrawal, demanded of the people to disperse, which they refused to do. He himself started firing, killing Shri Mansa Ram instantly. On the next day again a meeting was held, to protest against the previous day's firing and the arrest of the leaders. The military and the police made a *lathi*-charge on the people, so much so that two persons fell unconscious.

## SHOBHAPUR

A collective fine of Rs. 5000 was imposed because in the vicinity of this town wires had been cut.

6—*KHANDWA*

Detentions	...	100
Convictions	...	nil
Demonstrations	...	2

The students of Barhanpur High school were striking for many days. They staged demonstrations and went to the villages to deliver the Congress message, about 100 students were arrested.

7—*MANDLA*

Detentions	...	25
Convictions	...	54
Demonstrations	...	6
Government buildings attacked		5
Firing	... at 3 places	
Persons dead	...	1
Persons injured	...	5

All the important Congress leaders of this district were rounded up within a week. A seven-days' general strike was declared. On the 15th morning some students of Jagannath High School, Mandla, wanted to picket the institutions. The same day a public meeting was to

be held at Fateh Darwaja, and Mannu Lal Naik, a young-man, was giving his speech. Shri Malviya gave a five minutes' notice of dispersal to the people. Mannu Lal continued speaking and was arrested. A student named Udai Chandra was standing on the wall of the Mission compound. He too was flogged by the police when the general *lathi*-charge was made on the people. The people started hurling stones on the police. Mr. Fox, a Reserve Inspector ordered firing. Udaya Chand advised the people not to grow violent. He was asked by the police Inspector to leave the place, and threatened with firing if he failed to obey. He laid bare his breast and continued exhorting the people. He was shot at. For 25 minutes none went to him because of fear of the police. Then 6 police constables took him to the hospital where none was allowed to see him. He died in the hospital. His dead body, despite the entreaties of his father and relations was not given to them.

A bridge was destroyed some 3 miles from the Mandla City. Railway wires were cut and rails removed at many places. Another bridge at Babeha was dynamited. Similar things happened at Dandauri where 11 persons were arrested on the charge of attempting to blow up a bridge on the Narbada. At Lindorg letter-boxes were destroyed. The gate of the Kanzihouse was broken, wine shops were picketed and the office of the *gram-panchayat* and the Branch Post-Office were burnt. At Nainpur a *lathi*-charge was made on the processionists. Two small children were wounded.

#### 8—CHINDWARA

Detentions	...	85
Convictions	...	25
Demonstrations	...	6

At Lodikhara, Sonsar and Pandurana a public meeting was held and anti-British demonstrations were made. As a reprisal the D.C.C. office was burnt.

#### 9—BALAGHAT

Detentions	...	175
Convictions	...	17
Demonstrations	...	2
Firing	...	1

Persons dead	...	1
Collective fine	...	Rs. 3,000
Places of repression	...	3

There was complete *hartal* all over the district. On the 10th of August a huge public meeting was held in the evening in the Gandhi Chowk in which students participated in large numbers. Many workers were arrested at the spot. The library of the local high school and the glass-panes of the institutions were smashed. Later on wires were cut between Balaghat and Peepar Jhati railway stations. In all 12 arrests were made.

### BARASHIBANI

From 9th to 20th August peaceful demonstrations were held. On the 12th August, the President of the City Congress was arrested. A huge public meeting was organised to condemn this arrest. The Police was present but no untoward incident took place. On the 14th shoes were hurled on the war organiser at the station by the members of the Rastriya Navyuvak Sangh.

A firing was made at the people at Bara Shivani on the 20th August. One person died and many more were wounded. The shop of Shri Rajmalji Sharma was attacked because it was suspected that he was giving shelter to the people who had fled from Barashi. There was a pitched battle between the people and the police at the gate of his shop.

Shrimati Kashi Bai of Barashibani, a prominent worker of the place, was arrested along with three other workers on the 20th August, and taken to Kargatola village, where she was beaten. Her *sari* was torn and she was molested by 10 soldiers. Her sex organs were mutilated and her head was severed. Her father was called to the place, and he too was meted out the same treatment. Her ornaments, valuing Rs. 2000 and Rs. 75 which she had with her in cash, were taken away by the police. Gandhi caps and the torn pieces of her *sari* were burnt.

The same evening, when a peaceful procession was marching by the Jain temple, the police started firing on the processionists without warning killing one person, and wounding 12.

On the 21st, many arrests were made. Labourers from big *basties* were asked to attend a roll-call thrice a day. The women who stirred out of their houses were

locked in a *thana*. In all about 120 persons were arrested. At Barashibani reserve police was stationed, which remained in control of the place upto 10th September. The soldiers perpetrated inhuman atrocities on the people. Rs. 3000 were realised from the people as collective fine.

#### 10—DURG

Detentions	...	250
Convictions	...	50
Demonstrations	...	5
Firing	...	1

Anti-Government demonstrations were held at many places including Bailoth, Kushum, Seluth and Pattanbug-gong. On the 10th all the markets were closed as a mark of protest against the arrest of the leaders. Students were also on strike.

### REPRESSION

Firing was made on the peaceful processionists at Battang. Then a *lathi*-charge was made and most of the people were tortured with butt-ends of rifles. Ghashi Ram Mandal was badly injured. He lay down quite unconscious. It was in this state that he was arrested. After a few days he died in the jail.

#### 11—SAGAR-DAMOH

Detentions	...	200
Convictions	...	400
Demonstrations	...	7
Government buildings attacked		1
Death	...	1

Sagar is a very important district in Mahakaushal. It is a stronghold of the Congress. A firing was made on the peaceful people at Garhakotha. One person died. 15 were tried in connexion with the firing. Many *chalanis* were made out in the District under Section 34, in which innocent people were also implicated. Again, trials used to be held in Sagar on the market days which hit the poor people very hard. Regular processions and demonstrations became a common practice in Damoh. Girls used to play a prominent part.

## 12—JUBBULPORE

Detentions	...	150
Convictions	...	400
Demonstrations	...	5
Government buildings attacked		4
Firing	...	at 2 places
Persons dead	...	1

Anti-British demonstrations were held at Jubbulpore, Shihora, Pattan and Katni. On the 9th a public meeting was to be held in Jubbulpore. But before the scheduled time all the leaders were arrested and the meeting could not be held. From the 10th August students of local High School left going to school, and took part in public demonstrations. Often they used to be dispersed by the police with ruthless *lathi*-charges. On the 13th, when a meeting was in progress at Tilakground, teargas was used to disperse the people. But since they were prepared for such an eventuality it could not affect them. On the 14th a huge procession was taken out by the students. At the police station firing was made on the processionists. A student named Gulab Singh became martyr.

Madan Mahal Railway station was burnt, as also a post-office. Electric bulbs were destroyed and wires cut. About 550 persons were arrested.

In the absence of details about the movement in the other two districts of Mahakaushal viz. Raipur and Bilaspur, I have to content myself by only giving facts about the movement in these districts.

## 13—RAIPUR DISTRICT

Detentions	...	100
Convictions	...	700
Demonstrations	...	4
Govt. buildings attacked		2

## 14—BILASPUR

Detentions	...	83
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## VIDARBHA

The ancient Kingdom of Raja Nala, a hero of Indian

mythology, consists of four districts viz. Amrawati, Akola, Buldana and Yawatmal.

### 15—AMRAWATI

Detentions	...	700
Convictions	...	650
Government buildings attacked		7
Places of firing	...	3
Deaths	...	14
Injured	...	40
Demonstrations	...	44

Anti-British demonstrations were held at Morshi, Ettamgaon, Banaura, Launi, Sukhari, Khanapur, Razura, Amrapur, Chichargwand, Poni, Batora, Argaoon, Binaura, Taraura, Lehgaon and other places. Post-offices were looted, Registration Courts were burnt, wire cutting was resorted to at many places, Kanzi-house, grog-shops and *thanas* were smashed at many other places. The *Tehsildar* was forced to join the procession at Morshi and the National Flag was hoisted on the *tehsil*. The inhabitants of Ettamgaon, Launi, and Binora attacked the Binaura *thana*. The police opened fire. Five persons were killed, and 25 wounded. Collective fines were imposed on those three villages. At Khanapur the Ranger's office was burnt.

On the 15th an unsuccessful attempt was made to get control over the Imperial Bank, and the Post and Telegraph office at Amrawati. For full 15 days the students were on strike. A huge procession of students, 6000 strong, destroyed all electric bulbs.

Wires were cut at pawali. The D.C. imposed collective fines on the village. The Revenue Inspector was sent to realise the fine with some policemen but the people of the village jointly refused to pay. The D.C. himself reached with another police force, but he also failed. He ordered that the national flag be pulled down. The people resisted it, resulting in an affray between the people and the police. Five persons died at the spot and 2, a few days after. Some persons were wounded. Cases were instituted against the *Satyagrahis*, which went to the High Court. The judge condemned the police and declared that imposition of collective fines was illegal.

At Balgaon, Shirala, Akola Jahangir, Dariyapur, Alichpur, Dhamangaon, Chandpur and at other places similar demonstrations were carried out against the British. The people were exhorted by the leaders to non-cooperate with the authorities. At Chandpur Bazar (in Alichpur Taluka) a procession was taken out which was attacked by the police, who later instituted a suit against the leaders of the procession for having assaulted the police. The processionists were declared innocent. A civil suit was then filed against the police for compensation and cost, which was decided in favour of the people.

### 16—AKOLA

Detentions	...	150
Convictions	...	350
Government buildings attacked		1
Places of firing	...	1
Injured	...	50
Collective Fines	...	Rs. 2,700
Demonstrations	...	7

Even after the release of individual *Satyagrahis* in 1941, sporadic cases were launched at some places, especially in Akola District. All these cases were under D.I.R. for alleged hampering of the war effort. Before August 1942, four prominent Congressmen of Akola were in jail. At the news of the arrest of Gandhiji and other leaders spontaneous *hartals* were observed. The atmosphere became tense. Mill-hands struck work. Students absented themselves from schools. Public demonstrations and meetings were organised. The Government declared the Congress Committees illegal. In rural areas the police used 3rd degree methods. These included stranding men and boys in hilly tracts at night time, severe beating till they fell unconscious, breaking of limbs, putting of chilly-powder into eyes and anus. At some places apologies or assurances were sought under threat of beating or promise of good treatment.

The Students in general, and of Akola National School (which was taken possession of by the Government), and Tilak Rashtriya Pathshala of Khamgaon in particular, played a prominent part in keeping the tempo of the rural masses. Many students were arrested. Even

pressure was put upon parents to keep their wards away from politics. Mill workers of Sewatram Mills, Akola were continuously on strike for a month. The Yawali and Benoda shootings, and the thrilling incidents in Morshi *Taluka* in the Amraoti District, can favourably compare with Chimur and Ashti in the C. P., or Ballia in the U. P.

There were more than 2000 temporary arrests and irregular releases from Police lock-up. The following figures are of those who were either convicted or detained in jail :

(1) Under ordinary law 54 (Sec. 147 & 307 I. P. C.,)	
(2) D. I. R.	923
(3) Ordinances	No case of political significance

### LATHI-CHARGES AND CASUALTIES

There is no casualty report available of the victims, though *lathi*-charges were made at Akola, Amraoti, etc.

### REPRESSION

Sarswati Mandir and Rastriya School were attached by the Government, which remained under Government control upto March 1945. Shri Amba Das Patel, Shri Daulatji, Shri Ram Rao Patel and many Congress worker of Khirpuri were brought to Baragaon and beaten. For one month the military remained encamped in village Baragaon, and perpetrated many atrocities on the people. More than 50 persons were arrested including 30 women. 'C' class prisoners were treated very badly in jail. *Lathi*-charges, beating, molesting, and solitary confinements, were not uncommon. Food was generally bad, and many persons died just after their release.

There was no basis of assessment of collective fines. It depended upon the whim of the Revenue Officers. Caning and beating were resorted to for extorting fines.

### 17 - BULDANA

Detentions	...	100
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Public meetings were held, and processions were taken out. Two boys, who were found roaming about the railway lines, were shot at. One boy was killed and

another wounded. These boys belonged to some other districts. Presumably they hailed from Khandesh.

18—*YEOTMAL*

Detentions.

...

100

The People were peaceful and non-violent in expressing their opposition to the arrest of the leaders, and the repressive measures adopted in other parts of the country. Public meetings were, of course, held and demonstrations taken out.

## CHAPTER XI

### DELHI

The people of Delhi came to know of the arrest of Gandhiji and other Congress leaders through posters and other means. By 10 a.m. there was complete *hartal* in the city. In the after-noon a big procession started from the clock-tower, and passing through the lanes and streets of the city reached the Gandhi Grounds at about 6 p.m. At a conservative estimate the number of people who formed the procession and the meeting must have been at least fifty thousand. On August 10 they began to gather at the clock-tower from early morning and got ready to march this time towards New Delhi. A large police force was posted at Ajmeri Gate and the road to New Delhi was barricaded by military lorries. The people, however, managed to get through the Ajmeri Gate and proceeded towards New Delhi. The police then put up wire barricades along the roads. The procession sat down. A part of the procession managed to filter through the barricades, and recommenced the march. Military sergeants and police inspectors tried to interfere, but to no effect. Most of the shops in New Delhi had closed down. A few that remained open soon followed suit. There was a mammoth public meeting in the evening where about a lakh of people were present. Again, on August 11, they gathered at 8 a.m. This time the police greeted them with several *lathi*-charges. In spite of these *lathi*-charges the procession marched towards Kotwali. The leader of the procession, Hakim Khalil Ibrahim, a member of the P.C.C. was arrested. A man from the crowd threw a bottle at the Deputy Commissioner, Mr. La Bailli, injuring him on the eye. This provided excuse for a series of firings in which both the police and the military participated. One person was killed on the spot and a large number were injured. But this merely served to increase the passions of the mob, many persons were actually arrested in the act of cutting down telephone wires. The people then went about defying law and order, and freely cutting electric and telephone wires. The municipal office was raided and set on fire, when the Municipal Secretary refused to close the offices. A military

lorry was burnt down. There was another firing by the police. The people answered it by burning down a fire engine. Another fire engine and a fire fighting motor-cycle were consigned to the flames. The telephone connection between old and New Delhi was cut down. The Tommies fired upon a section of the crowd at Fatehpuri mosque, resulting in two persons being killed on the spot and several others injured. The disturbances spread rapidly to the other areas, particularly to the *pili kothi* and Queens Road. Petrol pumps were burnt down and one of the biggest buildings of the city, the Railway Clearing Accounts Office, was attacked and set on fire. The Police Inspector shot down a man. The people answered by killing the Inspector. The Income Tax Office received a similar treatment from the people. Near Paharganj, the British barracks were attacked and the soldiers living there were threatened. They sought safety in flight, and entered an Indian's Bungalow nearby. Between five and seven in the after-noon a dozen places of importance were set on fire. The police and the military resorted to several firings to suppress the people. There was complete darkness throughout the city, as all the electric wires had been effectively cut down. The people woke up next morning to find the city turned into an armed camp. The police and the military were stationed almost everywhere. In the afternoon the post-office at Paharganj was attacked by the people and burnt down. There were several firings by the military in the area round about Paharganj, in which a large number of people were killed and injured. Upto 13th August the total number of persons killed was 150. The Govt. figure of 44 is a deliberate under-estimation. The dead bodies were secretly disposed of with the aid of the Irwin Hospital authorities. It may, incidentally, be mentioned here that the Irwin Hospital authorities were very rude to the injured, and the treatment afforded was indifferent. To give an instance, transfusion of blood was flatly refused to an injured person. The reason given being that rebels do not deserve such treatment.

We give here summaries of the reports received, gathered upto the 30th September 1942.

(1) 125 clerks in the A.G.C.R's office submitted their resignations. (2) The cheque section of the Supply Dept. Accounts Office in the Council House was partially burnt down on the 28th August. (3) Shri M.N. Shah, Chief Chemist in the Delhi Cloth Mills, resigned. It is reported that his resignation was followed by other resignations

among lower officials. (4) The Cloth Mills and the Birla Mills had to stop working.

Both boy and girl students of Delhi took a prominent part in the struggle for freedom. Bulletins were issued and distributed regularly. Girl students picketed the houses of the members of the Executive Council. They spoiled Aney's evening party and compelled his guests to sneak in by the back door. On the 9th, small children stopped people from going to Offices. In some cases, when they were unable to prevent them from going, they made them take off their hats and ties—the badges of slavery.

### STUDENTS USED INGENIOUS METHODS

Some students out-witted the police by announcing a public meeting at New Delhi to be addressed by Aney and Sircar. After the audience had assembled a young man with a bell in his hand got up at the dais, took out a national flag from his pocket, hoisted it, raised slogans of '*Inqlab Zindabad*' and '*Mahatma Gandhi ki Jai*' and addressed the people. After due apologies to the audience for the absence of the announced speakers, he proceeded with his speech by declaring that the two revered gentlemen were too frightened to face the public. The police soon appeared at the scene, and he cheerfully boarded the police van shouting '*Inqlab Zindabad*'. On the 9th September many processions continuously paraded the streets in defiance of Section 144, when the police finally gave up all attempts to check the demonstrations. Delhi observed complete *Hartal* on the 9th. Every Muslim shop in Chandni Chowk was closed. A large number of workers and girl students went to picket the Assembly on the 14th September with flags in their hands. There was a *lathi* charge on the demonstrators. The picketers however stuck to their posts. 20 men were arrested and forcibly removed. 8 girls and ladies squatted on the ground and refused to board the police van. Eventually the girl and lady picketers surrendered to the waiting police in the evening after the Assembly was over. A procession of 11 donkeys, representing Indian members of the Executive Council led by Maxwell, was taken out in old Delhi. A few processionists and the 11 donkeys were captured by the police. Several cases of sabotage were reported and a number of arrests were made.

A special feature of the movement was that the ladies and girl students took out processions and organised *prabhat pheries* for the purpose of Congress propaganda.

The cyclostyled & printed bulletins continued to defy the press laws, and baffled the police and the C.I.D. Special bulletins in English, Hindi and Urdu were published in addition to the daily news-letters. About 200 persons were arrested in connection with picketing. Distribution of bulletins and active defiance of section 144, and other allied activities continued during 15th to 30th September.

Reports of ill treatment of detenus and prisoners in jail continued to pour in daily. There was severe *lathi*-charge on political prisoners in the jail on the 30th September. Lala Hanumant Sahai, an old Congress leader was reported to be severely ill. Detenués and political prisoners were lodged in the Punjab Jails, where the Punjab Government was giving 'C' class treatment to all, irrespective of their classification and social position.

A rigorous press censorship continued. A security of Rs. 3,000 was demanded from the local Hindi "Arjun", and its Press Mrs. Aruna Asaf Ali, Mr. Jugul Kishore Khanna, Joint Secretary of Delhi Provincial Congress Committee, and Syt. C.K. Nair were declared absconders under the special Ordinance, and their property was confiscated.

### OCTOBER DIARY

*1st October.* Demonstrations and *Prabhat Pheries* by ladies.

*2nd October.* Gandhi Jayanti Celebrations. Two processions, one from *Juma Masjid* mosque and the other from Katra Neel were taken out. Ladies' procession was also taken out.

*9th October.* 'Quit India Day' was celebrated by organising 4 processions. Partial *hartal* was also observed.

*11th October.* 'Martyrs' Day' was celebrated in memory of those who had died on the 11th August.

*15th October.* Picketing in front of Town Hall, where a meeting of the Delhi Municipal Committee was in session. Paper currency with 'quit India' slogan was circulated in large quantities.

*20th October.* Reserve Bank picketed.

*25th October.* Hindu College, Commercial College, St. Stephens College, City Ramjas College and Indraprastha College were picketed.

*31st October.* Several processions were taken out, the Jamiat-ul-Ulema offered *Satyagraha* every Friday after prayers,

## GOVERNMENT REPRESSION

*1st October.* Several house searches and arrests were made. Mrs. Yudhvīr Singh and three others were arrested.

*2nd October.* *Lathi-charge* and firing on ladies' procession resulting in 2 killed and many injured. 33 arrests were made.

*5th October.* A student worker was arrested.

*8th October.* Three Gurukul Kangri students were arrested for offering *Satyagraha* in old Delhi

*11th October.* 29 ladies arrested; 22 sentenced to a fine of 200 or 4 month's jail.

*13th October.* House searches in Katra Neel. Two arrests were made.

*15th October.* Two convictions in connection with procession of 11 donkeys representing eleven members of the Viceroy's Council.

*20th October.* House searches and raids by police on book-stalls and presses. 4 arrests before Reserve Bank.

*26th October.* 3 arrests before Reserve Bank.

*29th October.* 7 arrests including that of an Assistant Editor of the Hindustan Times.

*30th October.* 15 arrests, including 8 in Delhi Cloth Mills.

*31st October.* Two arrests.

*18th November.* Shri Nair, an important worker of the district, was arrested. He went on hunger strike soon after his arrest.

During the month, there were frequent raids and house-searches. A total of 125 persons were arrested that month. Third degree treatment prevailed in Delhi and Punjab jails. Ladies in Lahore Jail were dragged and confined in solitary places.

## GOVERNMENT LOSS

Several cases of wire-cutting were reported from rural areas. One goods train on B.B. & C.I. meter gauge track was derailed between Bijwasan and Gurgon (near Delhi).

*1st November.* *Karmacharis* of Kirana Market picketed the shops. 25 arrests were made.

*2nd November.* A portion of Chandni Chowk sub-

Post-Office was gutted. 4 persons were arrested.

*3rd November.* Badli Station (N.W.R.) on Delhi-Karnal section, about 10 miles from Delhi, was raided after mid-night and all records, etc, were burnt. No arrests were made.

*6th November.* A procession was taken out from *Juma Masjid* after Friday prayers. 2 Muslim processionists were arrested.

*9th November.* 'Quit India Day' celebrated. There was complete *hartal* in Delhi. Several small processions, and one big procession, were taken out in the afternoon in defiance of Section 144. 20 persons, including 5 ladies, were arrested. 3 A.R.P. posts were burnt down.

*10th November.* The house of a Professor in Tibbia College was raided and searched. Some bulletins were seized, 6 arrests were made.

*11th November.* *Prabhat Pheries* were taken out in the morning, and processions in the evening, to celebrate the martyrs' day in memory of those who died on the eleventh August. There was a partial *hartal* in the city. 7 persons were arrested. A bomb exploded in Chandni Chowk near the combined Railway Booking office. One person was arrested.

*12th November.* Gheora (N.W.R.) station on Delhi-Rohtak section, about 12 miles from Delhi, was raided and all records were burnt. No arrests were made. There was an explosion in the Birla Mills. An attempt was made to burn the shop of M/S Pearey lall & Sons in New Delhi. No arrests were made.

*13th November.* Telephone and telegraph poles were cut in New Delhi. There was a temporary break-down of telephone and telegraph communications in some parts of the city and New Delhi. Military and police pickets were posted in the vicinity of telephone and telegraph stations and offices.

## GENERAL

A number of arrests for distribution of bulletins and leaflets were made in the city and in New Delhi. Several persons were detained, and 3rd degree methods were employed to extort confessions.

## CHAPTER XII

### AJMER-MERWARA

Ajmer-Merwara, like the rest of India, played a significant part in the country's struggle for freedom. The Government was bent upon crushing the people's spirit, but all the repressive measures in forcing the struggling youths to humble submission proved useless. On the 1st of August, 1942, the leading congressmen of Ajmer-Merwara held a meeting and unanimously approved the spirit and the substance of the 'Quit India' resolution passed by the Congress Working Committee at Wardha.

### ARRESTS

On the historic dawn of the 9th August, the police began its direct assault by arresting at once 37 prominent workers of Ajmer, Beawar, Kekri etc. The police recklessly disregarded all legalities and conventions of justice and law in the matter of warrants and arrests. All the Congress Committees were declared illegal and their offices and records etc. were recklessly captured and mishandled. Even purely constructive and humanitarian organisations, viz, *Shri Gandhi Ashram* of Hatundi, *Gram Udyog Sangh* of Ajmer, *Khadi Vidyalaya* and library of *Harmara*, *Khadi Bhundars* of Ajmer and Beawar, etc. were considered dangerous institutions, shaking up the roots of Bureaucracy, and were consequently raided and captured. Property worth about Rs. 15,000 was auctioned off. These wilful and repressive measures of the authorities were expected to frighten and overawe the public in general. But the courageous youths and students of schools and colleges were not going to be so easily cowed down. They observed strikes in their institutions and organised processions which resulted in the arrests of many of them.

### THE TREATMENT IN JAILS

The treatment meted to the detenues and prisoners was really inhuman. The barracks were dirty and filthy, and food of a very poor quality. Newspapers were refused and interviews with relatives were not allowed. Even

letters were prohibited, to cut them off completely from the outside world of struggle and adventure. Even medical aid was most inadequate and utterly hopeless. Parole was not granted even on critical occasions. Their near and dear ones might be struggling helplessly on the death-beds, but they were never allowed to share their griefs and sorrows by paying sympathetic visits, and even the attention due to the departing souls. The nerve-shaking news of Mahatma Gandhi's historic fast in Ahmednagar Fort moved many a sincere sons of India to observe fast themselves. But all those who refused to take food were convicted and sentenced to fifteen day's rigorous imprisonment. The deplorable move of the Government in July, 1943 to obtain forcibly and treacherously, the signatures or thumb-impressions of the prisoners; was thrown to the dust by one and all, inspite of serious threats and tortures.

Shri Ramesh Vyas was forced to live in complete seclusion for two weeks and the behaviour of the jail superintendent towards him was highly humiliating. Mr. Vyas was forced to resort to hunger-strike which lasted three weeks. He was again convicted on this charge, though later on this case had to be withdrawn. Shri Lekhraj Arya was severely tortured, and even convicted on the charge of taking a copy of 'Harijan' with him. Shri Shankarlal varma, Mool Chand Asava, and Balkrishna Kaul were similarly convicted and troubled on petty and insignificant charges.

After 1943, the government slightly changed their tactics. They began releasing the detenus unconditionally but after the release, they imposed severe restrictions and obstructions on them. Some were directed to quit the province within 48 hours, and others were prohibited from using radios and motors, from participating in any movement, and even from meeting one another. Even the ordinary course of life was rendered difficult and impossible under these severe restrictions, and all those who refused to submit were strictly penalised. Shri Mool Chand Asava and Shri Gokul Lal Asava had to undergo four month's rigorous imprisonment and pay a fine of Rs. 200 each on the charge of defying the restrictions imposed on them to confine themselves strictly within the Ajmer municipal area. On the 29th feb., 1944, Shri Jwala Prasad Sharma and Shri Raghuraj Singh threw dust in the eyes of the jail authorities and absconded and could not be traced subsequently.

The tide of the revolution thus moved on and could not be brought under control by all the atrocities and excesses of the Bureaucracy. The youth were throughout full of vigour and courage and their enthusiasm never cooled. They defied all bans and restrictions, continued distributing pamphlets and organising processions, and cheerfully went through all ordeals and troubles.

## CHAPTER XIII

### SIND

Area	...	48, 136 square miles
Population	...	45, 35, 008
Arrests	...	Over 2, 400
Convictions	...	1, 400
Detentions	...	200
Floggings	...	100

Sind is a small province. Upto 1936 it was an administrative unit of Bombay Presidency, but the language, traditions, ethnology, customs and practices of the people of this district were so radically different from that of the Presidency that some Muslim leaders of the province started a movement and made a demand at the separation of Sind from the Bombay Presidency of the first Round Table Conference. Consequently, in 1936 Sind was constituted into a separate province. Sind is primarily a Muslim province with 70% Muslims, and 30% Hindus, Christians, Sikhs, Scheduled Castes and Parsees. The Hindus are generally city dwellers while the Muslim population abound in the country-side. The Muslims of Sind are divided into different *jirgas*. That is why the politics of this province are at variance to those obtaining in the rest of India. Syed, Bilochi, Meer, Pir and other *jirgas* are very powerful and play a prominent part in the politics of the province. There is considerable antagonism between them, but the growing hold of the Muslim League over the province has brought all the sections of the Muslims under the crescent. The Muslims of this province are patriotic to the core and are extremely anti-British, but, since they are being led by the Muslim League in its pro-British policy, they have not taken a prominent part in the freedom movements launched by the Congress. The Hurs of this province have time and again given a headache to the British.

Keeping in view the peculiar conditions, political and social, of the province the Congress High Command exempted the Congressmen and women of this province from

participating in the individual *Satyagraha* of 1940 and 41, but it was not possible to give them a similar option during the open Rebellion of 1942. The objective conditions necessary for a revolution were lacking in the province. That is why Sind was not very much stirred up when the rest of the country rose in revolt against the British. None the less the youth of the province responded in a very handsome manner to the call of the nation. Students of the province played a prominent part in the movement.

## NATURE OF THE MOVEMENT

To demonstrate the remonstrance and indignation of the citizens of the province against the arrest of the Congress leaders on the 9th August, *hartals* were observed everywhere, and the student community in general, and the girl students in particular, took a prominent part in organising such *hartals*. In their hundreds and thousands the students left their schools and colleges and joined the protest demonstrations. The British Bureaucracy made indiscriminate *lathi* charges and resorted to firing on these peaceful demonstrators. The Karachi city observed *hartal* for many days. Its important markets, e.g. the Karachi Mal Mandi and the Cotton market, remained closed for over a week. Every day in the morning *Parbhat Pheries* were taken out and at Idgaha and Rambagh mammoth meetings were held, where resolutions were passed condemning the arrest of the leaders. The police made reckless *lathi* charges but the number of the enthusiastic people did not by any means go down.

### 1—KARACHI

All the educational institutions remained closed for many weeks. On the 10th, 11th and 12th August the students, in conjunction with the citizens, staged huge demonstrations. The police made reckless *lathi* charges, wounding many people, some of whom were innocent and harmless and had been taking no part in the demonstrations. The policemen used to put themselves in hiding, even in clubs, restaurants, libraries, etc., and whenever any man or woman passed them he or she was attacked. Even small children were not spared, and many students were severely beaten. The people were harassed, manhandled and tormented in many ways. This infuriated the students and further estranged the citizens. They picketed the schools and Colleges which were still functioning. The

N. J. High School and the Church College were among those institutions which were picketed. Since the students of Queen Alexandria College were putting on 'Quit India' badges, they were not allowed entry into the institution.

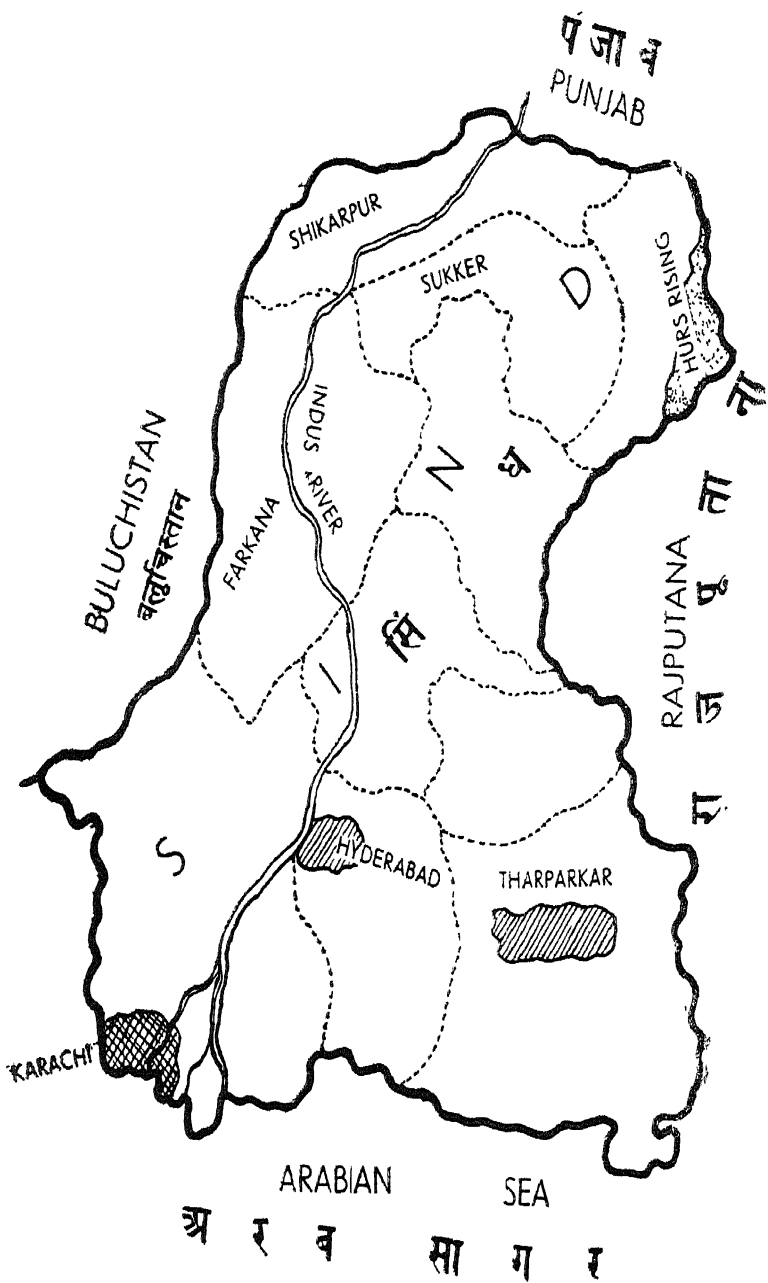
Owing to the repressive measures adopted by the police and the serious *lathi* charges made by the red-turbaned army the people took to new and novel methods of warfare. They used to stand up on their house-tops in the dead of night and shout the Congress slogans. Long processions on cycles were taken out and the police had to run in order to arrest the demonstrators. The demonstrators used to sing the national anthem and shout national slogans. At many places foreign made clothes were burnt. Hats and neckties were snatched away and burnt; Congress bulletins used to be sent to officials packed in Government envelopes; for many days even the Reserve Bank was picketed; and the mercantile community of the city passed resolutions criticising the Government policy.

## SABOTAGE

For many days the bus and tram services in the city came to a stand-still. One tram car was burnt. People travelled ticketless in busses and cars. At many places telephone and telegraph wires were tampered with, letter boxes were damaged, and railway bogies were attacked. The train running between Mattir and Karachi for Military transport was stopped. In the district of Karachi the movement continued for 3 months in some form or the other.

### 2- HYDERABAD

In the beginning there was complete *hartal* in the city. The students left the schools and colleges and participated in the movement. Some 30 students of the local Medical College were expelled because they left the College and joined the insurgents. In the district of Hyderabad the movement had very slow speed, and a limited scope. The enthusiasm for the movement cooled down after peaceful demonstrations, though it did not completely cease. The people of the district continued fighting for their liberty in some way or other for many months. Every month 3 or 4 days were allotted when they would assemble together





and express their abhorrence for the foreign rule. On the 9th November efforts were made to hold a flag salutation ceremony, but the police forestalled them and began arresting the people before they could meet. Still *Prabhat Pheries* were brought out. This almost maddened the police. All persons putting on *Khaddar* and *Gandhi caps* were caught hold of; many were arrested and convicted. Many more were fined, and the rest were flogged.

When the Hyderabad educational institutions reopened for the second term, the attendance was still too thin, although the Government had threatened the guardians of the students that drastic action would be taken against them if their wards failed to attend their classes.

On the 21st November an effort was made to take out a huge procession in the Azad Park. The police arrived at the spot and warned the people to disperse. Many arrests were effected. Most of the people left for their places but the women refused to comply with the order. They continued shouting national slogans. The students picketed the Medical College; the teachers and peons of the institution however maltreated the students. This considerably provoked the students who tried to retaliate. In this way even after the close of the year 1942, the movement continued in Hyderabad.

### 3- SHIKARPORE

There were many *hartals* and demonstrations. The number of sabotage activities was by no means insignificant. The Civil Court of Shikarpore was gutted and Gariaseen Post Office was burnt. At Nawabshah the office of the Munsiff was burnt. Such activities were reported even from Larkana, Dadu and Jakohabad.

### REPRESSION

In the first two weeks of the movement about 400 workers were arrested. The women constituted more than half the number. The police officials of Sind meted out very barbarous treatment to the women. They were caught in the dead of night and taken to the thick jungles, where they were left alone.

In Dadu the students organised *Prabhat Pheries*. The police made 16 arrests in the beginning. 10 students were convicted for one year each, the other 6 were flogged

so much that they profusely bled and fell unconscious. Such instances occurred at Nawabshah also. Three volunteers who were picketing a liquor shop were arrested. They were sentenced to corporal punishment, and when, an Indian soldier was whipping them, a European Military officer came out of his bungalow and punished the soldier for being lenient and less ruthless in whipping. He took the whip and himself began to whip them. All of them fell unconscious.

#### 4—SUKKUR

The movement started with *hartal* all over the district. The people planned to take out a procession to celebrate the *Gandhi Jayanti*. About 300 arrests were made by the police and the arrested persons were released in the evening. Many of them were slapped and others caned. The indignation of the people was thus heightened. They took to dislocation activities by forming themselves into groups, and removed rails and culverts on the Sukkur and Rohri railway line. The police was then fully armed and maltreated the people during their 'man-hunt'. One was tied to an ice slab. Many persons were taken into custody and tormented in varied ways. These excesses committed by the police further provoked the people to take to recourse to sabotage activities. Two second class compartments were set on fire and efforts were made to burn the godown. Some cotton bales were burnt and the Sukkur Municipal Board School was gutted and all the records and papers of the institution were consigned to the flames. Many a time telephone wires were tampered with at Shikarpore, Sukkur and Jakohabad. When the Sukkur station was set ablaze, military equipment worth over a lakh of rupees was damaged. For two or three months colleges in Shikarpore remained closed and many colleges were picketed. On the 28th November two Congress volunteers entered the court of the City Magistrate and asked the Magistrate to quit his office. Before the police could arrive the volunteers had escaped. Two students were sentenced to one year's imprisonment each for picketing.

The movement could not gain speed, and could not have a wider scope, because the essential ingredients for a revolution were not present in Sind. The majority of the Muslims had no sympathy with the insurgents. On the contrary, it was always feared that they would at any time turn the movement into a Hindu-Muslim interneçine

war, terming it a purely 'Hindu' revolt, because the Muslim League leaders were always speaking in that strain. But since there were no Hindu-Muslim riots in Sind, it is evident that even the Muslims in the province are anti-British, though the Muslim leadership does not lead them to strike at the British.

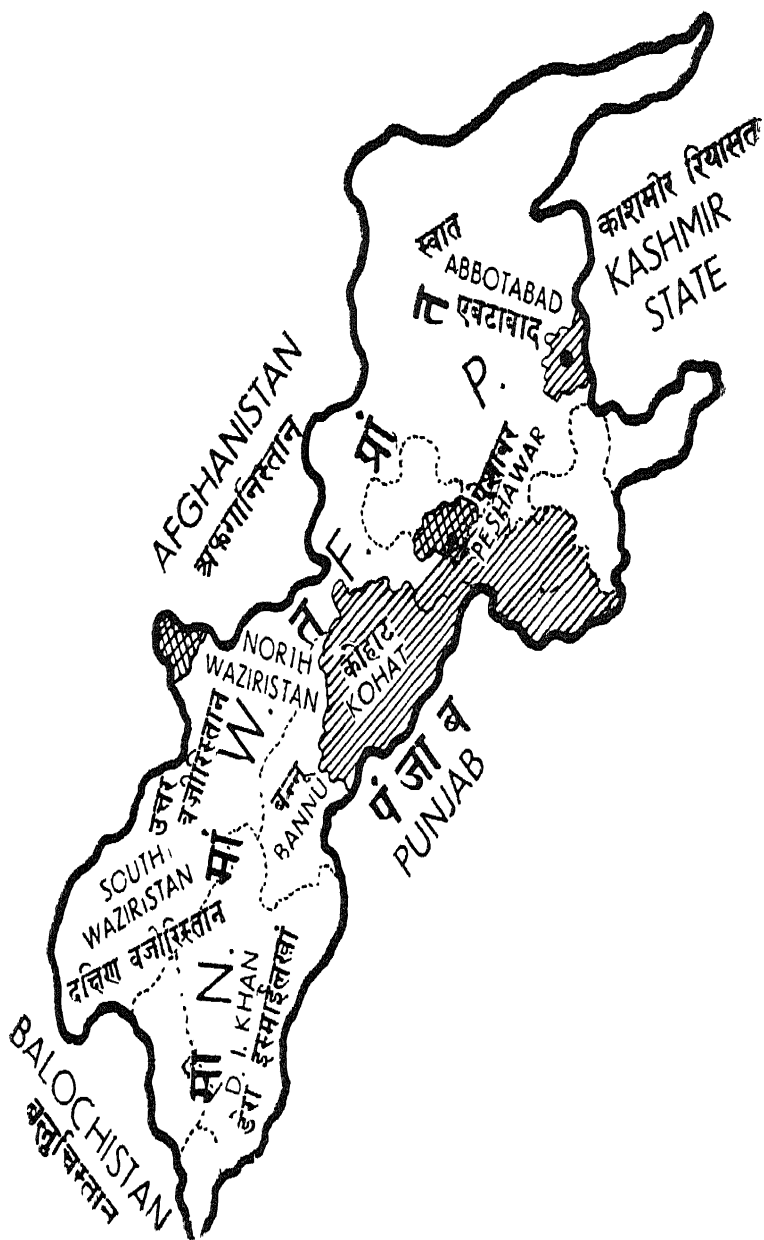
## CHAPTER XIV

### NORTH-WEST FRONTIER PROVINCE

Area	...	36,206 square miles.
Population	...	54,85,666
Arrests	...	2,588
Convictions	...	1,880
Detentions	...	708
Firing	...	1
Wounded due to <i>lathi-charge</i>	...	from 500 to 1,000

North-West Frontier Province has a unique place in Indian politics. All the three parties, British, the Muslim League and the Congress aspire to have their hold in the Frontier. That is why all these parties take lively interest in the social political and economic movements sponsored in the province. The Frontier is populated by 95 percent Pathans who are in an over-whelming majority in the North-Western and North-Eastern regions of the province. This region is called the tribal area. There are many tribes in this region and the Bureaucracy has a deep interest in the politics of those tribes. While these tribes think that they are free, the British Bureaucracy on its own side keeps itself busy in trying to maintain its hold over the people living in this region. This part of the province has virtually been made into an arena, or a playground, for the British soldiers. The Government of the province cannot interfere with the matters of these tribes. The Governor, through the Political Department, reigns supreme over these tribes. The Political Department has persistently followed the policy of keeping these tribes segregated, and keeping them aloof from the stir and tension of the politics of the country as a whole. In fact the aim of the British has been to cut off the Frontier from the politics of the rest of India.

The Congress also has a wide interest in the N.W.F.P. because it is the only province where the population is 95 per cent Muslim, who have always figured prominently





in almost all the freedom movements launched by the Congress. During the 1930 and 1932 movements the people of the Frontier created a unique record of sacrifice and service for the cause of the freedom of the country. In 1930 when firing was made on Indians in Peshawar the brave *pathans* laid bare their breasts and faced the machine guns. The soil of Peshawar had gone purple with the blood of these brave *Pathans*, who are by nature simple, straight-forward, clean and frank. There is hardly any trace of crookedness in the Pathan. He is a good friend and a relentless foe. In 1930 the Pathans of the Frontier accepted the Congress leadership, and have since then proved valiant fighters for the nation's liberty, and have taken a prominent part in all Congress movements. Many attempts at different times were made by the Bureaucracy to win away the Pathans from the Congress, but the Pathans, under the leadership of the great Khan Brothers, who have infused new life in the Frontier and given new hope, new ideals, new visions and a new philosophy to the Pathans, have always pinned unflinching faith in the Congress. It is one of the marvels of the modern age that the brave Pathans understood the efficacy of non-violence as an effective weapon of warfare. The Pathan has a sharp intelligence and enough adaptability and power of assimilation. He can move with the changing times. This is one of the reasons the Pathan is present in every part of the country.

During the past few years the Muslim League has also evinced active interest in the people of the Frontier, because in their anxiety to represent the entire Muslim population of the country, they have felt the need of working amongst the Pathans. They could not tolerate that the whole province of N-W.F.P. should be behind the Congress, because faced with such a hard fact they could not prove their representative character. They were given every encouragement by the British Bureaucracy to win the Frontier for themselves. During 1941, when the "Individual Satyagraha" was on, the British Bureaucracy adopted a curious policy. Thousands of Pathans took part in the movement, but they were not arrested because the Government felt that if they suppressed the Pathans they would rally round the Khan Brothers and turn hell against the British. In 1942 also, when there was a great conflagration in the country and the iron wheel of repression was rolling over many peaceful hearths and homes, the Frontier Government acted with patience and calculated sobriety. The Congress leaders in the Frontier were not arrested in

the beginning, and there was a regular hide and seek in the province between the Congress leaders and the Government. The Government thought that the Pathans would unite together and work against the movement. But Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan foresaw the protracted character of the movement, and was not prepared to exhaust the resources of the province all at once. He, therefore, raised an organisation that would adopt the policy of a protracted war against the British. After organising the movement in this way, he personally plunged into it in October.

### THE SHAPE OF THE MOVEMENT

The movement as conducted in the Frontier can be divided into 2 parts. To begin with, mammoth meetings were held and the people were exhorted to treat themselves as free citizens; a declaration of complete independence was also made. Such meetings were held at many places, but the Bureaucracy did not show any signs of repression. This encouraged the Pathans, and they freely moved from place to place, giving to the people the message of complete liberty. In October Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, in order to infuse new life in the movement and to ginger up the spirit of the people, turned the movement in another direction and started picketing liquor shops. Batches of *Khudai Khidmatgars* would march to different liquor shops and picket them. Gradually these batches attacked the bungalows of Government officials, public institutions, the Secretariat, the police stations, etc. The *Khudai Khidmatgars* carried the message of freedom even to the barracks of the soldiers. Now it became imperative for the Bureaucracy to change their policy of watch and wait. The authorities turned their might against the *Khudai Khidmatgars*. At every place these *Khudai Khidmatgars* incited the people to rise against the British, and gave them the news of the establishment of a free and sovereign Government in the Frontier. They exhorted the people to give their undivided loyalty to the New Government. The programme of mass attack on all the emblems of British authority at Peshawar and Bannu continued in operation for over two or three months. Two or three times a week batches of *Khudai Khidmatgars* would march to Government institutions, and hoist the national flag there. In the month of October the well-organised batches of *Khudai Khidmatgars* made their first attempt to hoist the national flag on the courts at Peshawar. The police was thus compelled to make a

*lathi*-charge on the workers. While these assaults by the police increased the workers also kept on promoting their programme. The Government, thus defeated in pursuing its policy, arrested all the Congress leaders. On the 6th October there was a complete *hartal* in the city. In order to terrorise the people many shops were damaged by Government Agents. The people, thus provoked, strengthened the hands of the *Khudai Khidmatgars* in making attempts to snatch power from the British. The Bureaucracy's reaction was *lathi*-charges, and more *lathi*-charges. The particular feature of *lathi*-charging in the Frontier was that, it was not the head but the abdomen which was struck, obviously with the purpose of causing internal injuries. On 19th, 20th and 21st October many successful and unsuccessful attempts were made by the people to deliver a final blow to the British. They attacked the Police Stations and other public institutions. Hundreds and thousands of people of Peshawar joined this holy war against the British. Many hundreds of them were wounded.

During the month of October, about 25 persons were arrested almost daily in Peshawar, and this continued up to December. Similar things happened at Bannu, Kohat and Mardan. The salient feature of this movement in the Frontier was that the Bureaucracy did not want to follow the methods of repression popular with the authorities in other provinces, because they were afraid of the tribes. A dual policy of repression and persuasion was, therefore, followed. Later on, when the people took to sabotage activities, the Bureaucracy at first tried to be indifferent to them, but it was forced to change its policy when it saw that it was being directed too far away from the desired goal. The people were then subjected to innumerable hardships and indignities. Hundreds of people were wounded. Even small children were flogged. The movement gained such momentum and fury that the authorities were forced to arrest Badshah Khan. This, in a way, was a blessing in disguise, because it stimulated the people to work for the emancipation of their motherland with added vigour, zeal and enthusiasm.

## CHAPTER XV

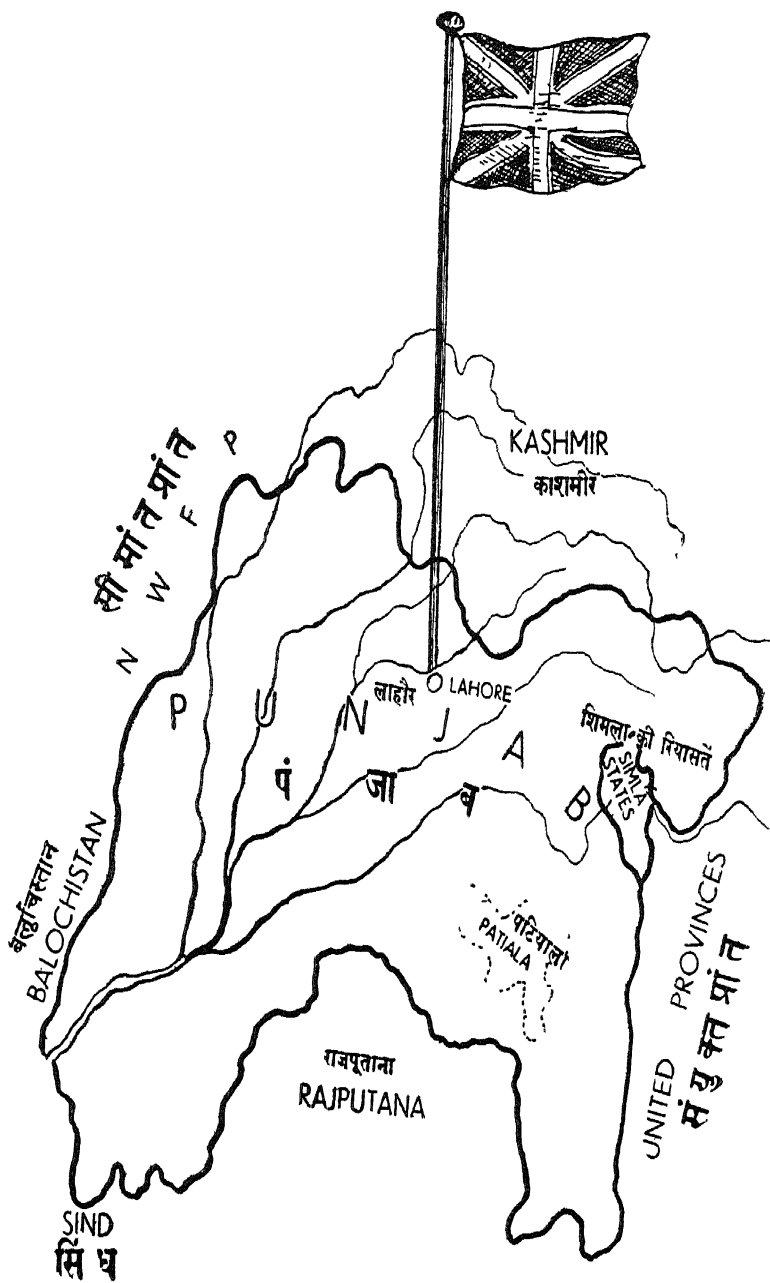
### THE PUNJAB

#### POSITION OF THE PROVINCE

The Punjab, or the land of five rivers, is so called from the five rivers which flow through it namely, the Jhelum, Chenab, Ravi, Beas, and Sutlej. Together with the North-West Frontier Province and the Indian State of Jammu and Kashmir, which lies to the North, the Punjab occupies the extreme north-western corner of the Indian Empire, and with the exception of the above-mentioned Province, comprises all of British India north of Sind and Rajputana and west of the river Jumna. Previous to October 1912, the Punjab embraced an area of 136,330 square miles and a population, at the census of 1911, of 24,187,750 (inclusive of 28,587 trans-frontier Baluchis that is say, about one-thirteenth of the area and Population of the Indian Empire. But the formation of the separate Province of Delhi reduced the area and population of the Punjab by about 450 square miles and 380,000 souls, respectively. The total population of the Province in 1931, including the Baloch tribes on the border of the Dera Ghazi Khan District, was 28,490,857 of whom 4,910,005 were in the Indian States.

#### SOCIO-POLITICAL BACKGROUND

The Punjab is a land of religions old and new, orthodox and 'ultra montane'. All shades of creeds and faiths are represented in the Province. Sects of all denominations are represented in it. The Punjab is a conglomeration of sects, groups, and castes. It has the major religions, but their sects have a peculiarity of their own. There is uniformity, cohesiveness and integration in the religious world of the Province. Religions, with all their demarcations, stand sphinx-like and overawe their adherents. Tendencies of segregation in the religions of the Punjab are most prominent. Idealistic religious movements have found a fertile soil in the Punjab, and have, to a great extent, been responsible for creating 'high tension' in the Provincial life, especially in urban areas,





Politics, like religion, is all in a muddle in the Punjab. Qualities of compromise, adjustment, and mutual appreciation of commonsense, evaluation of thinking and living are conspicuous by their absence in the gamut of socio political struggle. The rural Punjab is still sound and free from the high temper of the pathological urban Punjab. In urban areas religion is being exploited by communal interests, in the arena of politics, for the mastery of power. With this urban and rural back-ground, the economic factors in the Punjab cannot be viewed from the stand point of rationalized economics. The domination of one communal group over another, as socio-religious entites, is the politics of the day. This is considered the bane of its Provincial life, and such communalized politics have so far failed miserably to solve the politico-economic problems of the Punjab. As a result the province stands condemned in the eyes of the world.

## THE PUNJABIS AND INDIAN POLITICS

The Punjabis are essentially emotional, and individualistic, and money making is their only pursuit. In commerce they have made many adventures, which have made the economic position of the Punjabis very sound. Before the last war the Punjab was the chief field for recruitment, and has been called "the sword-arm of India". It has indeed great martial traditions. For centuries the invaders of India poured through the passes of the North-West Frontier into the Punjab and fought there for the control of India. Fighting is in the blood of the people. The Punjab contributed more men to the fighting forces than any other province. These qualities of the Punjabis, viz, the business-like attitude and a highly developed instinct for fighting have made the Punjabis bad fighters in the freedom's battles. They could never develop a sense of solidarity, team-spirit, corporate life, and cooperation. It is no exaggeration to say that the Punjabis joined the British army only for their mercenary gains. Many Jats and Rajputs, both Hindus and Muslims, have thrived because of the army. They have become Jagirdars and rent-receivers. The martial zeal of these people, as well as their mad hunt for money, have been carefully exploited by the British, who have utilized them to crush the freedom movement of India right from 1857. A Punjabi cares more for his purse than for his political and civil rights.

The British in India have always looked to the Punjab as their strongest fortress. They have, therefore, tried to kill the patriotic instinct of the Punjabis by giving them more and more of jobs bearing fat salaries. Thus the Punjabi as a businessman, as a soldier of the British Army, and as a bureaucrat, has rarely played any significant role in the freedom's battle. On the contrary, he has always aligned himself with the rulers that be.

A leader like the late Lala Lajpat Rai is a rare phenomenon in the Punjab. The Punjabis, rolling in opulence and favourites of the bureaucracy, have not imbibed the spirit of the 'Lion of the Punjab'. They have no stamina for service and suffering for the cause of the Nation. Many factors are responsible for it. The Muslims who form a majority of the people of the Province have either come under the influence of the Muslim League, or the Unionists. Both of these parties have always been with the British and have always prospered under the British patronage. The rural population of the Western Punjab, where Muslims preponderate, has been either in the Army or has been fed on anti-Hindu and anti-Congress ideas by the Muslim League. Hindus, who preponderate in the Himalyan regions, have either taken to business or have joined the British Army, because no agricultural improvement can be made in those regions. Sikhs are divided into different political parties, viz. the Congress, Akali and the Communist Party. The Jats who form the bulk of the rural population are indifferent to the political struggle. They have always been with the Unionist Party, which, for all practical purposes, is pro-British and is a strong political party in the Province. That is the reason why in every Punjabi home we find at least one agent of the British Empire, busily curbing the higher instincts of the other family members.

The Congress also is not very well organised in the Province, and the essentially bellicose instinct of the Punjabi has also been imported into the organisation and leadership of this party. Changing political allegiance, or acting as a shuttle-cock in the field of politics, has been very popular with the leaders of the Province. Moreover, the leadership of the Congress in the Province is formed out of the urban middle class population. That is why the hold of even this great political organisation, the Congress, is restricted to the towns. Whatever

national activities have been done in the province, were essentially localised in the urban areas. No concerted effort has been made in the past to politically educate the masses in the country-side. On the whole the response to the call of nation has, therefore, been tragically poor.

### THE 'OPEN REBELLION'

As already mentioned a Punjabi is essentially a sentimental being. He is readily led by gusts of passions. But he is lacking in power of endurance. These traits were amply in evidence in the Punjabis' struggles for freedom during the movements launched by the Congress.

When the news of the arrest of the Congress leaders reached the Punjab there was high tension in its atmosphere. There were spontaneous *hartals* and stray meetings. Many arrests were made, and the Congress offices were sealed. Near about Rawalpindi and Lahore some cases of tampering with telegraph and telephone wires occurred. The profit-and-gain mentality of the Punjabis drove them to business in this period of boom, stifling their finer emotions which were subordinated to their monetary considerations. The movement, therefore, could not continue for a longer period in the Province. It was essentially confined to important towns, mostly with Hindu majority.

The lure of rewards and prizes in the form of services and lands, which was held out to the people by their late Premier, Sir Sikandar Hayat Khan, also persuaded the Punjabis to stay off their hands from taking active part in the movement.

All credit for keeping up the candle of liberty burning in the Province must go to the women of the Province, who fared far better than their menfolk. They proved better suited as freedom's soldiers than their other-halves. The girls proved beyond doubt that they could compete with the other Provinces, and sacrifice their best interests for the cause of the nation.

The youth of the province were instinctively driven to secret activities, after Shri Jayaprakash Narayan's escape from prison. They joined his secret organisation in their hundreds and thousands, and played their own role in the movement of 1942. Undoubtedly, the youth of the Province, whether in the Communist fold, or in

the soldiery of Jayaprakash Narayan, hold out the promise that the era of capitalistic enterprise in the Province is gradually giving place to Socialism, and that patriotic sentiments will soon permeate the whole province.

## CHAPTER XVI

### THE INDIAN STATES

#### BACK-GROUND

The British rulers have always looked to princely India as their political harem. In fact, from the very beginning they put some restraint on their annexation policy. They did not want that the whole of India should be directly ruled by them, lest one day, when the Indian Nation rose against them, there should be none in the country to assist them to stay here. They created various interests, and lulled them to a false sense of security. They freely and frankly told them that their life and property was safe only so long as the British were in India, as rulers.

Princely India was the first to belong to the tribe of "vested interests". It is one of their strongest citadels, a defence line as invincible as the Maginot Line of France. Call it by any name, but the fact is that the States in India have always served as the strong fortresses of British Imperialism. The Princes not only have been given full liberty of sapping the life force of their subjects, but were also expected to come to the aid of the British, and work as a hurdle in India's political, economic and social progress. Not once, not twice, but times without number, have the princes proved their unfaltering loyalty towards the British. In 1857 it was some of the princes who held back the hand of the clock and blocked the country's forward march.

The Princes have come to be associated with medievalism, autocracy and reactionism. Yet, even the princes are not themselves free. They are not free to act as they wish. The Resident keeps them under the British heel, and if at all they try to do something detrimental to British interests, the iron heel enters their flesh.

The existence of the princely order in hundreds of patches on the map of India, is very suicidal for the desired growth of Indian nationalism. Not only is one-third of the Indian population left to the sweet mercy

of the Indian princes, but the princes themselves, who have come to be associated with titles, decorations, unpunished and unchecked exploitation, palaces and parks in the midst of ghettos, human drudgery side by side with fabulous luxury and dissipation, will remain static and unimproved, always at the whims and caprices of the foreigners who do not wish them well at heart. The Congress knows it. It has many enemies, foreign and indigenous, to defeat before it can establish in India a society fashioned after its own ideals and principles. Indeed, for the establishment of such a society in India the Congress was to demolish this as one of the four pillars of British Imperialism in India. The Congress succeeded in persuading the people to surrender titles, and resign from services in 1921 and subsequently. The landed aristocracy and the capitalists always came to the Congress fold, or at least showed their sympathies for the Congress and its cause. The Indian States still remained solidly behind the British. But since the Congress for many years was busy in consolidating and harnessing the forces of the land against the British, it had neither the time nor the wish to start an active freedom movement in the states, to synchronise with the movement in the provinces, even though it knew that the sufferings and miseries of the people of the states were more numerous and their wounds much deeper, than those of their brethren in the Provinces. The Congress had started to function and spread the message of freedom in the states in 1919, but upto 1942 it did not find it advisable to launch any great movement in the states. The States were being governed under the old and obsolete rules, stampeding the growth of nationalism among the people, and conspiring against the emergence of an efficient leadership and organisation of the states-people as an anti-imperialistic force. The Congress, therefore, set up a "states people's conference" in 1927, by way of a platform for the people of the Indian States, where they could assemble together and ventilate their grievances. The conference could be utilized as a force, seeking to redress the wrongs done to them by their rulers. Under the efficient leadership of Jawahar Lal Nehru and Pattabhi Sitaramayya, political consciousness was created among the states peoples, and the rulers were persuaded to see the light of the day and to function as the custodians of the legitimate rights of the people. *Praja Mandals* were established in almost every state.

When the people of the Indian Provinces got a considerable degree of autonomy in 1937, the Congress saw a great anomaly in their attitude towards the Indian States. When the people of Indian Provinces were set on the road of progress the people of the Indian States could no longer be allowed to live in conditions of Mediaeval autocracy. The Indian Princes having refused to prove amenable to the spirit of the age, and the crying need of their people an active movement against the princely order was the only remedy. But due to the following reasons the Congress could not do so :

(1) No revolutionary leader can succeed in a movement which he himself cannot lead.

(2) The leader cannot shape the movement according to his ideology, unless the people understand the nature and character of the movement, and are prepared to fall to it whole-heartedly, and without reserve.

(3) Upto 1942, the Congress High Command was averse to launching a country-wide movement. Its policy was to concentrate its energy on a movement at a particular place, and win for it the sympathies of the entire nation. Bardoli, Khera and Nagpur Satyagraha are examples of such a policy.

For these and other reasons the Congress High Command did not want the people of the States to launch an active movement against the rulers, and thus antagonise the princely order so long as the British remained the rulers of India. But it by no means meant that the Congress had no interest in the emancipation of the states' people. The Congress always felt anxious about the states' people, and held strong views against the existence of autocratic rulers in India. But it was only marking time, and waited for an opportune moment to strike against the princely order.

## WAR PERIOD

The War proved to be a great levelling factor in Indian politics, since it abolished the artificial geographical, political and other barriers between the Indian States and the rest of India. The whole of India began to react to the war, the situations created by it, and British Imperialism. For the first time, both the so-called British India and Indian India began to feel strongly against British Imperialism. The existence of the British as rulers in the land began to be looked

upon as the source of all our troubles, and the potent cause of all the maladies and afflictions that the country was suffering from. Strangely enough, all this happened during a period when physical conditions worked in the direction of keeping the people separately the inadequacy and scarcity of transport and communication facilities, as also various restrictions promulgated by the omnipotent rulers at Delhi. What actually brought the people together, mentally and spiritually, were the common difficulties and miseries created by the War, e.g. inflation, sky-high prices, curtailment of supply of various commodities, forced war-loans and contributions, various repressive measures adopted by the rulers such as declaring strikes in mills and factories as illegal and punishable, and, lastly, the common danger of a Japanese invasion.

These conditions created a remarkable political consciousness among the states-people, and they strongly craved for political independence. Thus what could not be achieved during so many decades, was accomplished with ease within so short a period. Revolutionary ideas and ideals swept across the Indian States, and the states-people felt a bound of union with their brethren in the Indian Provinces in their fight for the Nation's freedom. Japan's swift victories assured the people of the states and the rest of India that British Empire in the Far East was tottering, and that the country must rise up in revolt for her own advantage.

The arrest of the Congress leaders in Bombay on the 9th August sent a wild fury in every Indian State. Every body woke up, as if, from centuries of slumber, though the States people had no previous experience of freedom's wars. They were strangers to the movements started under the aegis and leadership of the Congress from time to time, nor was sufficient and efficient leadership available in the Indian States before 1942. But the masses proved valiant and disciplined fighters, and their new leaders afforded such good guidance, that one cannot but congratulate them and feel proud of the people of the States. They had to suffer unspeakable, monstrous and relentlessly inflicted hardships. But they did not bend before the storm, and continued their up-hill journey with unshakeable faith in their destiny and power.

From the point of view of the mass-uprising of 1942 we can divide all the States of India into four categories:--

1. Central India-comprising Bhopal, Gwalior, Alwar, Ratlam, etc.
2. Orissa States comprising Nil Giri, Talchar, Nayagarh, Dhelkenal etc.
3. Smaller States of Kathiawar.
4. Southern India states-Mysore Kolapur, Hyderabad etc.

Since there were no significant activities in connection with the Movement in Rajputana states, they are not discussed in the following pages.

### 1—CENTRAL INDIAN STATES

#### GWALIOR

Gwalior is the biggest state in Central India. After the arrest of the Congress leaders, the workers of the Gwalior Praja Sangh organised a meeting in which the Bombay resolution of the Indian National Congress was endorsed, on August 23, 1942. An ultimatum was given to the Maharaja of Gwalior that by the 30th August he must sever all relations with Great Britain, and declare the establishment of a responsible government in the state. Naturally, the Gwalior Government replied to the Praja Sangh by arresting and putting under detention all the important leaders of the Sangh. Before the 30th August the round up of the leaders was complete. But even before the Sangh gave its ultimatum, the movement was already in progress in the state. Students and mill-workers had begun organising demonstrations. On the 30th of August, when the students who were on strike, were taking out a procession, they were attacked by Bohra Musalmans of Ujjain with *lathis*. Many small children received serious injuries and the whole city was panic-stricken. The business in the city came to a stand-still, and a major conflict began to shape itself. From 12 o'clock to 4 P.M. brick-bats and stones were exchanged and after 4 P.M. the shops of these Bohra Musalmans were looted. The administration promulgated Section 144 immediately, and thus averted serious trouble. The most interesting factor about this movement was that the Muslims freely cooperated with the Hindus in punishing these aggressive Bohra Muslims, so much so that the Muslims took the main part in looting their shops. It was the first instance of political opposition by the Bohras. It seems that they had been incited to commit this hideous crime. It was for this reason that they took prominent part in suppressing the Movement. When the Congress was in session in Bombay on August

8, the Chief Mullah of the Bohras had come to Ujjain, where he was given a rousing reception and taken out in a procession. Pakistani slogans were raised, and speeches were made in favour of Pakistan. The looting incident, already adverted to took place just five days later. Thereafter schools remained closed for many months, and the shops were also closed for a number of days.

On the 16th of August the students declared a strike, and took out processions, which were attacked by the police armed and mounted. The students were trampled down, and a severe *lathi* charge was made in Luskar, the Capital of the State. Many students were wounded, and the movement gained in momentum and tempo everywhere in the State. On the 8th September a peaceful meeting was to be organised in Ujjain. The police had given an assurance that they would not impinge upon this elementary right of the people. The people thus assured by the police were peacefully sitting and listening to the speakers when, in contravention of their previous assurance, the police cordoned off the meeting, and mounted police delivered a *lathi* charge and also machine gunned the people. Even women and girls were surrounded and beaten. Many women and children got deep wounds and fell down on the roads, profusely bleeding. Those who proceeded to pick up the wounded were caught hold of and flogged by the police. Section 144 was promulgated, and the city was put under police control. Police patrols were posted at every cross-road outside the city, upto a radius of two miles. Innocent people coming to and going from the city were treated as beasts and beaten, irrespective of their age and physical condition. The police freely broke into the houses of the people, and flogged the inmates, in *Sarafa Bazar*, the main market of the city. Many persons were wounded.

On the 9th September, the people assembled at a spot where a man had been bayoneted, and had sanctified the place with his blood; floral wreaths were placed at the spot and lectures were delivered. Very soon the police laid siege to the place, and prevented the oncomers from joining their compatriots. There was a complete *hartal* in the city between 1st September and 9th September. The court was picketed, and compelled to cease functioning. A crowd, 3000 strong, would daily march to the court, and picket it. Upto 8th September, the authorities did not interfere with the picketers, but after the 8th the police and the military were in complete control of

the city. Most of the leaders had already been arrested, and a number of people had left the city because of the epidemics which were taking a heavy toll of life. No great mass demonstration, therefore, could be held in the city thereafter. People were still full of enthusiasm and their spirit was still unchecked, but there was no one to give them a lead. The new leadership had evaporated under the weight of hard repressive measures. The movement, therefore, in the State subsided by the end of the 2nd week of September. About 250 persons were arrested and many of them were gradually released. When only 100 persons were left behind the prison bars, the Working Committee passed a resolution in May 1943 withdrawing the August Movement. After that all the prisoners were released. Some of the workers of the State took part in the Movement outside the State and were arrested in other districts.

### KOTA

Immediately after the arrest of the Congress leaders general strike took place in Kota State. The Students also took part in the strike. Workers of the Praja Mandal were arrested, which merely gave greater courage to the people. They stood at guard at all the city gates, making it impossible for the police and the military, and other people, to enter the city. The tri-colour was hoisted on the Kotwali and the police constables present there were locked up in the barracks. The entire city was under the control of the people and there was complete strike in the city for full three days. For these three days peace and tranquility was maintained in the city. There was no untoward happening. The Diwan of the State insisted that the military must enter the city even by breaking the gates and opening fire, but he did not receive the agreement of the Maharaja and the military authorities. For three days there was grim tension. The political Agent also arrived. On the third day Appaji, the returning officer, assured the people that if they allowed the police and the military to enter the city by opening the gates there would be no recrimination against and victimisation of any person. In case the police opened fire, he would be the first man to receive the bullet. The people thus assured opened the gate. The military and the police was allowed to enter, made to march past the national flag, and after giving a receipt to them at the kotwali took the control of the city from the

people. After a few days the leaders were released, but while they were still under arrest a deputation of the people waited on the Maharaja and received from him a promise that he would soon take necessary steps to establish responsible Government in the State.

Mr. Mudaliar, the Diwan, who was in the confidence of the Political Department, and who had failed in his attempts to get the police and military to open fire on the people, was dismissed. The people staged a demonstration when he left the state, and a procession followed him up to the station. The bogey in which he was sitting 'somehow' caught fire !

### BHOPAL

The Bhopal State Conference passed a resolution endorsing the 'quit-India' resolution of the Congress, on the 18th September. The resolution was printed outside the state, and as it reached the station the copies of the resolution were taken possession of by the authorities. A house to house search was made. Police guards were posted at the houses of prominent workers, and the office of the Conference. All the workers and members of the Working Committee were arrested.

Students were caught, brought to Kotwali and beaten. A fort-night's holiday was declared. Students belonging to Ahmedabad Mohalla were feasted and matches were arranged for them, to prevent their mixing with other students, and taking part in the movement.

Seven workers were convicted and others went underground. Govind Prasad Srivastava, the students leader, was also sentenced for burning the post-office and for other similar offences.

Iltaf Mazdani, Editor, Jamhoor, fell ill in the midst of the trial. When his condition deteriorated he was acquitted, but after a short period he died. The highest sentence of 2 years' imprisonment, and Rs. 100 fine, was awarded to Shakil Ali Khan.

### INDORE

From a political point of view Indore is the most important state in Central India. The open revolt of 1942 found the people of Indore State as its most active participants, and the Movement was at its greatest

intensity and range in the state. Indore was fortunate to have many valorous workers, who resolved to do something for the liberation of their Motherland. It is not wrong to say that the workers of Indore State conducted the movement in the neighbouring states also, and created an enthusiasm unique in the history of the states peoples. After the arrest of the Congress leaders huge demonstrations were organised in the city and processions were taken out. After a few days the Movement flared up even in the villages. Similar demonstrations were held in all the towns. About 500 workers were arrested and convicted for six to seven months, but the movement continued in the state. The people made an organised attack on the Indore Jail for securing the release of their leaders. Sabotage activities were carried on at many places. The movement had a happy end in the Indore State, because a compromise between the Maharaja and the Prajamandal leaders was reached, and all the workers were released unconditionally.

### SAMTHAR STATE

Efforts were made to conduct the Movement in the state, in some way or the other, but due to the arrest of their leader, Prem Narain Tewari, the state people could do nothing in connection with the open revolt of 1942.

### ORCHHA STATE

Many workers of the Orchha State had joined the Orchha Sewak Sangh, formed by the Maharaja much before the 1942 movement. Therefore, there was no activity in connection with the movement in Orchha and Bundelkhand, though the workers who did not agree, worked in the Orchha Sewak Sangh. They came to the United Provinces, took part in the movement, and were arrested.

### RIWAN STATE

There was no major activity in connection with the movement in Riwan state. There were minor and stray activities here and there. Many workers were already arrested in connection with the movement which followed in the wake of the Riwan Maharaja Episode.

### ALWAR

Students tried to organise strikes and raise slogans

but the State authorities crushed the student's movement in every possible way. One teacher was dismissed and was forced to leave the state.

In the similar way the students of Sitamau State were oppressed and the movement was suppressed there too.

Efforts were made to launch a concerted movement in the four states viz. Gwalior, Indore, Bhopal and Dhar. A committee was formed for this purpose. Everywhere the movement was conducted in a non-violent and peaceful manner. But the heartless repression made the people more firm and forced them to indulge in sabotage and dislocation activities. Some bombs burst in Indore but no damage was reported. The Political Department followed only one policy in every state to suppress the movement.

## 2—ORISSA STATES

There are many small States in the Province of Orissa. After 1937 when the Congress Ministry was formed in Orissa a wave of revolts swept over all the states of the Province. They saw a great difference in their own lot that of their brethren in the Province. They could not tolerate that they should still be ruled by autocratic rulers. They also wanted to fight for their civil and political rights, and have a voice in the management of their own affairs, like the people of British India. It was for this reason that during this period the Congress was in power in Orissa. There was a great mass uprising in the states of Orissa. Leaders of the Province gave their full sympathies to the states, peoples and on many occasions provided them with leadership. A very grim situation was thus created for the states' rulers. Though the movement of 1942 was not so much intense, rapid and all-embracing as the movements of 1938-39, yet there were many activities, carried on by the masses in a non-violent and peaceful manner. In 1942, the people had become politically conscious, and determined to win for themselves all the rights, civil and political, lost to them. The states, authorities adopted cruel repressive measures and showed their determination to crush the unarmed people, to the last man. They detested the people's leaders and were out to nip in the bud every possible trouble, by harshly treating the leaders. So determined were the states, authorities to quell the

rebellion that at many places they magnified small and sporadic incidents, just to arm themselves with suitable pretexts to treat the people in any manner they liked. A mass uprising took place in Nilgiri, Talchar, Dhekanal, and Nayagarh states in 1942.

### NILGIRI STATE

Praja Mandal leaders were arrested much before the Movement started in 1942. They were charged with planning a mass-movement in the state. The people reacted in their own way against these arrests. They declared a social boycott of the state-officials, organised partial strikes, and closed the markets twice a week. They assured the *Darbar* that if their leaders were released there would be no social boycott of the officials. In this way the release of the 11 leaders was secured, some of whom remained in the state and started working for a fresh movement and the rest went out of the state. The state authorities trembled in their shoes on finding the masses briskly preparing themselves for delivering a final blow to the authorities.

On the 29th September a crowd, one thousand strong attacked Barhampur Thana and pressed the police to release the people's leader, Sjt Chintamani. The police had arrested him at Kathhpall Gram and lodged him in the same *thana*. They made a concerted move to secure his release and at long last succeeded in their efforts. On the 21st September efforts were made to rearrest Chintamani at Kathhpall Gram. The people sounded their bugle, and asked the others to assemble together and defeat all the attempts of the police to arrest their leaders. About 4,000 persons, armed with bows and arrows, rushed to the spot and forced the police to take to their heels.

The *Darbar* of Nilgiri State imposed a collective fine of Rs. 75,204/- on one hundred villages. The political agent with an armed police force, himself went to realise the fine. About 2,500 people with their bows, arrows and spears opposed him and his men at Behrampur. 4 or 5 police constables were attacked. The police also opened fire.

### TALCHAR STATE

Talchar is economically the most important city in the whole of Orissa because it has 3 big collieries owned

by the B. N. Rly., the M. S. M. & Co. and the village rs. It has a match-factory and several other petty industries.

Due to its economic importance it is connected with Cuttack by a broad gauge branch Rly. line. There are many fine rivers and dense forests in the state.

The State is politically awakened. During the last 30 years it has experienced 5 agitations and rebellions. With the exception of the 1942 war or rebellion, as you may call it, the agitation launched against the state in the year 1938 was the most important and wide-spread.

The agitation of the year 1938 was purely a non-violent one launched against the mal-administration of the Ruler. 65,000 people out of the total population of 85,000 left the state as a protest against the ruthless and barbarous methods of oppression the ruler adopted in curbing down the subjects and the *Satyagrahis*. These 65,000 refugees took shelter in the adjacent British Area in Angul sub-division of Cuttack district of Orissa. This refugee problem was so great and so genuine that it attracted the attention both of Mahatma Gandhi and the Congress High Command on the one hand, and of the Orissa Governor and the Viceroy on the other. The then Congress Ministry was prompt in coming to the succour of the refugees. This great Hizrat movement created among the people a burning and inordinate love for their motherland, and a strong desire for political independence. They were anxious to find a channel for the display and outburst of their pent up and suppressed energies. The August movement supplied them with a suitable channel for their pent up political energies and potentialities.

The agitation was stray and sporadic in the beginning, but assumed its vehemence and mass nature between the 1st September and the 15th September 1942, after the rumoured murder of Pabitra Baboo, the Prajamandal President. The underground workers continued a guerilla warfare till the end of May, 1943.

### THE SCHEME OF THE MOVEMENT

The subjects disobeyed all State Laws. They organised their own Governments. Chasi-Maulia (Mazdur) Raj, on the basis of adult franchise, was established in each village, block, circle, *Pargana* and sub-division. A Central Government was also constituted on the same basis. The Village *Panchayats*, formed the nucleus of

this system of Government but even then no vestige of power allowed to exist. The village headmen, *chaukidars*, school-masters, the block-officers, circle-officers, and other mofussil and itinerant officers of the Police, excise and the revenue departments stationed at different sub-centres of the state, voluntarily offered their guns, dresses, badges, papers, records and cash to these locally constituted *Panchayat* Governments, and swore their allegiance to the same. What was more encouraging was the fact that they voluntarily burnt their dresses, badges, papers and records, after submitting the same to, the new Government. In some cases they took organisational parts. All the means of communication, like roads, bridges, *ghats*, ferry-boats telephonic system came under the control of the chasi-Mazdur Government undamaged. The telegraph system was cut off. The Cuttack Talchar Railway line was systematically destroyed for miles together, rendering train service impossible for months together. The three mofussil police stations surrendered to the new government. The only sub-division head-quarter at Kania was deserted by the authorities. Thus, throughout the length and breadth of the whole state, having an area of 400 square miles, no place was left uncaptured and uncontrolled by the newly constituted *Panchayat Raj*, except the Principality, the Talchar Town, where the Ruler and his most devoted servants took refuge under the might of the British Infantry and Royal Air Force. All these was effected peacefully and without any blood-shed. The gun-powder Magazine and Dynamite Stores of the local collieries, together with a good number of guns, were available for the service to the people.

Simultaneously with the formation and running of the *Panchayat* Governments in the whole state, the new Government constituted its volunteer Army, called the 'National Militia', which was armed with all sorts of crude arms and implements usually found in a village. The militia consisted of every able-bodied person of the state.

After establishing the people's Raj in the whole state, the Militia resolved to march to the Principality, the Talchar Town, which was the only place left unconquered by the newly formed *Kisan Mazdur Raj*.

The marchers (militia) intended first to tell the ruler to relinquish British authority and hand over the Government of that town to the *Kisan Mazdur Raj*,

himself acting as a constitutional Ruler. Removing British power from the Talchar State they intended to free the neighbouring British sub-division of Angul of Cuttack District, and the other adjoining Orissa States like Dhekanal, Pallahra and Bamra from British Rule.

### PEOPLE'S ATTACK ON TALCHAR

Thus, with this purpose in view, on the 6th September 1942 the militia started from each village towards the principality in military array. Although they were equipped with all sorts of local crude implements, like country guns, swords, shields, spears, arrows, bows, axes, hatchets, spades, spikes, crowbars, plough-shares, hammers, *lathis*, kerosene, petroleum, jute, rags, etc. yet they did not intend to unnecessarily use the same until and unless they were attacked. These were mainly meant for self-protection, and constructive purposes, rather than for using against the State.

### AERIAL BOMBARDMENT

When after the rumoured murder of Pabitra Baboo on 1st September 1942 the State realised the gravity of the situation, which demanded the Ruler to implement "Quit India" resolution by severing British connection, the Ruler and his young son fell prostrate at the feet of the Political Department on the 3rd September 1942. The reactionary British Imperialism came promptly to the aid of its stooges by requisitioning the services of the Royal Air Force and the Royal Military Infantry on the 4th September 1942.

Thus, from the 4th September 1942, the state people witnessed and experienced the Royal Air Force flying through the length and breadth of the state, and the infantry guarding the principality for a period of two weeks.

Although every child of the state saw and experienced the Aeroplanes flying just over their houses with thundering rattles, and deafening roars, dropping gas-bombs, tear-gasses and pamphlets, and although the marchers militia was fully conscious and aware of the consequences of bombs, bullets, shells and shots from machine guns and rifles, yet they were never demoralised and disheartened. The requisition of the Air Force had rather an enkindling and determining effect on the non-violent masses and

militia. Hence the militia was determined to achieve its end at any cost.

With the above purpose in view the marchers, militia started marching towards the principality amidst ominous and suspicious sounds of "Hari Bol", "Ulu Ulu", "Conch", "Nagara" the Hindu War Drum and "Veri" and "Singa", the Hindu war pipes. The vociferousness of these mingling sounds, together with the sky-renting slogans of "Bharat Chhoro" (quit India) "Karo Kimba Maro" (Do or Die) rendering the rattling sounds of aeroplane inaudible, goaded and inspired the marchers not to care for death, and destruction, but to achieve and acquire the emancipation of the motherland. Thus marching from the 6th September 1942, the mass (militia) encamped at the market mango-grooves of principality in a semi-circle around the town, on the 7th September, 1942.

Just opposite to the lines and camps of the mass-militia, and closely encircling the small principality, the Talchar Town, were arrayed the state and the mighty British Ground Force. In between these two armies, one part of the well equipped and well trained mighty British Force, and the other, a non-violent Satyagrahi militia, was left a streak of land nearly 3 furlongs in width as buffer land over which the Aeroplanes were most active.

### EFFORTS FOR COMPROMISE

The marchers ( Militia ) made an effort to negotiate with the ruler for transferring power to the newly constituted people's Raj, himself acting as constitutional Ruler free from British control, but the ruler would not permit this to be effected. Neither entrance into, nor exit from the principality, was allowed. Even the people's plenipotentiaries, who overtured on behalf of the subjects, were butchered and imprisoned. Now there was no hope but to "do or die"

Thus, when all their peaceful attempts to negotiate were scornfully and humiliating ly trampled down and destroyed, the Satyagrahi Militia found no other means but to carry out the Dictator's order "do or die". They peacefully attempted to break through the enemy line to establish Chasi Maulia (Mazdur) Raj in the only unconquered place left in the principality, but cannons from the right, cannons from the left, cannons from the front, cannons from the back, and cannons from above,

got them wounded, left them killed, and rendered them baffled. Thus, they attempted "to do", and they "died" in their attempt i. e., they did and they died.

### REPRESSION

The State perpetrated all sorts of brutalities and unthinkable inhumanities upon the people. Non-violent masses were fired upon by the military infantry, from behind smoke walls created by the aeroplanes. The machine-gunning from aeroplanes and firing by the ground force was effected simultaneously. This firing resulted in the instantaneous death of 4, and wounding of more than 100. Firing and machine-gunning from the aeroplanes on the afternoon of the 7th September 1942 again took place the following day. As has been mentioned above, the buffer land between the masses and the military infantry (requisitioned by the state) was a streak of land having a width of nearly 3 furlongs. The aeroplanes flying overhead above the tree-tops, and barely head-high altitude over the masses, rendered protectional and observational service to the Military Infantry. They dropped tear-gas bombs and machine-gunned the masses, while the ground force marched towards them. When the ground force was within rifle-range of the masses, the aeroplanes created a smoke wall by dropping smoke and gas-bombs, and hiding behind this smoke screen the infantry opened random rounds of fires upon the masses.

### THE MILITARY DEMONSTRATION

On the day next to the bombing incident came the turn of the military parade through every village. The state authorities adopted their previous strategem in this march, i.e., the aeroplanes flew overhead rendering observational, strategical and protectional services to the infantry that marched through the villages. They flew above and ahead dropping tear-gas bombs and pamphlets in the villages, bathing-ghats and paddy fields, and the ground force marched from village to village, looting, plundering, pillaging and ravaging the same, which were deserted by the inhabitants, who took shelter in the neighbouring British Sub-Division of Angul, or in the jungles of the adjoining States.

But even there the refugees were brutally butchered by the ground forces, who, in conjunction with local

officials, caught hold of the refugees and penalised them in the most barbaric manner.

### TELL-TALE FIGURES FOR TALCHAR

Arrests	...	350
Convictions	...	300
Wounded	...	150
Absconders	...	30
Internees	...	11
Deaths	...	8
Executions	...	1
Area	...	400 Sq. miles
Population	...	85,000
Income	...	Rs. 250,000/-

### NAYAGARH STATE

The freedom movement raging in the Nilgiri and Talchar States had deep repercussions in the Nayagarh State. On August 16, in contravention of an Ordinance passed by the state, the people of some of the villages organised a protest meeting condemning the arrest of the Congress leaders. The Police and State authorities did their best to prevent the people staging such hostile demonstrations, but the movement continued engulfing other villages also, till the state authorities were forced to seek the assistance of the British Police. 72 persons were arrested and a collective fine totalling Rs. 8,000 was imposed on 19 villages.

On the 9th September telephone wires were cut near Haripura village. The movement gained momentum after the arrest of the *Praja Mandal* leaders. A demonstration was organised of all the villagers of Kanabak, in which 300 Gonds participated. It was resolved that the tri-colour must be hoisted on each and every building, state-officials must be asked to relinquish their jobs, the people must make organised attacks on headquarters, and thus secure the release of their leaders. The state authorities, as they came to know of such a programme, made full preparations to foil the attempts of the masses. Some of the leaders were arrested and military police was massed at Barkola. Sabotage programme was now implemented by the people. At Kadali Banda, Nadi

Ghar and Nikoli telephone wires were tampered with. On the 10th October, in the dead of night, the villagers of Kaundha marched towards Barkhola and set the Dak-Bungalow and the School building on fire. Then they proceeded towards Biharjhaula where six police constables were already posted. These policemen got over-awed at the sight of the huge mass-upheaval proceeding towards them; they were arrested by the people and their guns were snatched away.

The triumphant mob, thus maddened by the victory it had scored, marched towards the Nowgong *Thana* and burnt the forest bungalow and school building. Inhabitants of the villages that fell in its way joined the mob, and by the time it reached Nowgong its strength was above 3,000. They surrounded the *thana* on three sides. The *Thanedar* warned the people not to step forward, but the people refused to obey him and continued their onward march. At this, 5 rounds were fired on them, resulting in the instantaneous death of 5 to 7 persons. The people took the dead bodies with them in a procession. The same day, *i.e.* on the 11th October, another procession starting from Barkhola was heading towards the *thana*. In the way all the Dak Bungalows, schools, offices of the Forest Department, etc. were burnt. The people took away with them the uniforms of *chaukidars*, soldiers, and the Forest Department personnel. At Mahipur the processionists divided themselves into two batches and on reaching the *thana* from two separate directions they demanded the release of their leaders. The *thanedar* tried to persuade the mob to disperse but they refused to listen to him. The *thanedar* ordered firing, forcing the people to run pell-mell.

### DHENKANAL

The Movement, as in other neighbouring states, was a considerable success in the Dhenkanal State. On the 26th August, as a protest against the arrest of the leaders, demonstrations were organised and *hartals* were observed. On the 2nd September, under the leadership of Vishnu Charan Patnayak, a mass procession attacked Chandpur Thana and the local school. Four guns were taken possession of in the *thana*, as also 75 cartridges. A second attack was made under the same leadership just two days later. This time the people were armed with 30 rifles and other weapons. Another party, under the leadership of Mr. Diwakar Biswas, was coming to participate in the raid.

The police was sufficiently well-prepared to face the mob. No sooner did the processionists reach the *thana* than they were fired upon and many persons died and many more received serious injuries.

### 3—KATHIAWAR

Kathiawar has never lagged behind in the struggle for Indian Freedom. Kathiawar is a small peninsula, divided into states of various sizes—each ruled by a Raja, a Nawab, a Thakore, a Talukdar, a Darbwar or a Bhagdar. very few have a yearly income in lakhs, while many have an annual income ranging from a few thousands of rupees to a few hundreds only.

Mahatmaji had advised the States' people to concentrate on two issues; one was the attainment of responsible Government in the States, the other was to lend no support to war efforts. 'Responsible Government' in the States did not lend itself to be used as a plank in the August 1942 Movement. Efforts were, therefore, directed to lending no support to war efforts.

Repression had crushed the open struggle throughout Kathiawar in two or three months. Sabotage activities followed; telegraph wires were cut, post-bags were looted, derailment of trains and blowing up of bridges were attempted. This is the tale of Kathiawar's role in the August 1942 Movement.

The main struggle in Kathiawar centred round Bhavnagar, Rajkot, and Porbunder. Jamnagar, Wadhwan, Amreli and other cities were also affected.

### BHAVNAGAR

Arrests	...	361
Detentions	...	61
Convictions	...	300
Persons who were arrested and shortly released	...	500

In Kathiawar, Bhavnagar was the centre of war production. As the struggle started, various demonstrations were made by the people, and particularly the students, to stop war work. They marched on work-shops and mills and demanded a cessation of work. The people also tried to march towards sea-ports, but the authorities did not allow it. The leaders had been arrested at the outset;

later, demonstrators were put under dententors, *en masses*. There was a series of *lathi* charges and other acts of repression. But repression did not break the people's spirit. The authorities imposed heavy fines and recovered them by attaching the property of the workers. This created great difficulty in the homes of the workers, and broke their spirit for an open struggle.

## RAJKOT

At Rajkot, there was no direct participation in the war effort. The struggle was therefore purely demonstrative. There were meetings and processions but even these ceased after a brief period.

In Porbander, the Kharwas (the sailor community) were in the fore-front of the struggle.

In the beginning the people organised processions and meetings, demanding that articles badly needed by the people should not be exported from the state. The leaders were soon arrested. This provoked the people, who rallied at the port area, and threw into the sea, several bags of sugar intended for export. The situation was beyond the control of the authorities; they were compelled to release the leaders in order to establish order. No sooner order was restored than the leaders were arrested again.

The people marched in a huge procession to the palace of the Maharaja to demand the release of their leaders. The Ruler kept the people engaged in friendly talk for hours, meantime, *ahirs* and others were brought in lorries from the neighbouring villages. At a signal, a stone was thrown by obviously an *agent provocateur* at the Rana who assumed anger and withdrew. Then the Police, the *Ahirs* and others had their way. Indiscriminate assaults were made on the people. For days terrorism ruled the city of Porbunder. Many were arrested and removed to unknown places. White caps, and even the ordinary *dhoti* became the target of the *Goonidas'* sticks. It became impossible for certain classes of people to come out of their houses for some days.

## REPRESSION

No demonstration on the part of the people was unaccompanied by a demonstration of might on the part of powers-that-be. The States were almost vying with one another in this exhibition. At Bhavnagar the women

had organised a procession to represent their grievances to the Maharani. The only answer of the state was a *lathi* charge on the peaceful demonstrators.

Conditions in jail for those convicted were simply awful. Here Palitana takes the palm. *Lathi* charges inside the jail were frequent. At Bhavnagar, about fifteen detenus were assaulted while in custody, and severe injuries were inflicted on them.

### COLLECTIVE FINES

Fines imposed had also taken up a *Riyasati* colour. Porbundar surpasses all others. The Maharaja called certain respectable citizens and imposed heavy fines orally, which totalled Rs. 120,000. These were speedily exacted at the point of the bayonet. The only crime worth mentioning was a near or distant relationship with some worker, or someone nationally inclined. Very recently all the fines were remitted. In Bhavanagar the fines totalled Rs. 17,000. In Amreli the Baroda Government exacted Rs. 14,000 by way of fines.

### BARODA

Following the arrest of the national leaders on August 9, 1942 processions and meetings were held in the village of Choranda under the leadership of Shri Amba Lal Gandhi. The people heard of the arrest of the Praja Mandal leaders, and the death of two youngmen, on August 18, 1942. Meetings were held in large numbers throughout the length and breadth of Baroda State.

### SABOTAGE

The objective of the sabotage activities was to prevent the movement of military for crushing the movement. The episode centres round Shri Amba Lal Gandhi, known after this incident as *Tyagbir*, whose bravery and sufferings have crowned the incident. Speaking about *Tyagbir*, Sir V. T. Krishnamachariyar, the then Diwan of Baroda, said, "I salute Mr. Amba Lal Gandhi for suffering for what he considered to be a right thing, but where are such martyrs? There is none among the Prajamandal leaders and followers who can even remotely approach Mr. Amba Lal Gandhi in purity of heart and action."

A meeting was held at Kurali, a village three miles away from Choranda. Shri Amba Lal Gandhi, with a large crowd from Choranda, reached Kurali. News was received at the meeting that military sepoys were going to Synor to crush the movement as it was beyond the control of the local officers. There was every likelihood of military firing on the Synor crowds. Synor is on the G. B. S. Railway, five stations away from choranda. The military train was due at Kurali within a few hours.

Shri Amba Lal Gandhi led the crowd. Rails were removed for a distance of two miles. The crowd burnt the railway station, wooden sleepers 'choro' (of the Gram Panchayat), and letter-boxes. The railway station of "Vemar," next to Choranda, was also burnt on the same day by other crowds.

### THE REVENGE

The people dispersed. A few hours after the removal of the rails, military sepoys, with some officers, came by a Special train, which stopped at some distance from the place where the rails had been removed. The military sepoys attacked Shri Amba Lal Gandhi with *lathis*. He lost consciousness and was deeply wounded on the head. His servants who were in a nearby shop belonging to him, were arrested, beaten and abused. They were taken to the special train and locked up in a carriage.

For one month the people of the village of Choranda were at the mercy of military sepoys. Choranda and the surrounding villages were compelled to pay a collective fine of Rs. 45,000. Young and old people were arrested in numbers, without evidence. About 100 persons were closed in a G.B.S Rly. carriage at Miyagam, having a capacity to hold only 56 passengers. For seven days the people were locked up without food and with insufficient water, undergoing many other privations. During those seven days, two meals were given to the prisoners by the local inhabitants of Miyagam. Grams were distributed irregularly, to keep body and soul together. About 35 persons were removed to the Baroda Central Jail after a week.

### THE TRIAL

In the beginning of October 1942, a Special Court was set up. The Court worked for a month and on 16th November 1942 sentenced Shri Ambalal Gandhi to

rigorous imprisonment for 12½ years, and a fine of Rs. 15,550. Mr. Premanand Bhatt was sentenced to 10 years' rigorous imprisonment and a fine of Rs. 5000/-. Others were given sentences of rigorous imprisonment ranging from two to eight years. Shri Amba Lal Gandhi was a shopkeeper in Choranda. His shop was sealed on August 23, 1942, and several costly things were looted from it.

### AFTERMATH

Of the convicted persons some people were released on appeal. Shri Ambalal Gandhi and others were released in the month of February 1943 by the Ruler of Baroda on grounds of mercy. At the end of 1942, an Inquiry Committee was formed to investigate charges by the people against the military sepoys. Several officers and sepoys were dismissed. The collective fine was also refunded.

Shri Ambalal Gandhi was given a warm and loving reception in Baroda on his release. Speaking to the crowded meeting in Baroda, Shri Ambalal Gandhi said that the act of sabotage was the outcome of an intense desire to save the people of Synor. He was proud that not a single man was hurt or killed in the incident.

### MYSORE

The Mysore state responded magnificently to the call when it came. For a number of days, from the 11th August onwards, there were huge meetings and processions in the towns and cities of Mysore. The Mills, schools and colleges were closed.

### BACKGROUND

At the time of the arrest of the leaders, the Congress in Mysore State was actively functioning, with its ramifications extending to most of the villages in all the 9 districts. Prominent among its activities was the organization of labour. Labour Unions were organised in all small and large factories, with Congressmen as office-bearers, so that to-day labour is fully under the guidance of the Congress.

Mysore is on the whole a poor province; but the custom of the President of the Mysore Congress, to visit *taluka* head-quarters when a purse would be presented to

him, provided the machinery for tapping small sources as well, and supplied sufficient funds for the routine activities of the Congress. The result was that the organization was kept intact even in periods when there was no important programme before the country.

## STRIKES

Conspicuous among the first reactions were the complete strikes and active demonstrations by the students and labourers. Workers of the following industrial concerns went on strike for two weeks, as a protest against the arrest of their leaders.

1. Binny Mills, Bangalore	7000	workers
2. Maharaja Mills	2000	"
3. Minerva Mills	1500	"
4. Mahalaxmi Mills	1000	"
5. Kaiser-I-Hind Mills	800	"
6. Krishna Weaving Mills	1000	"
7. Smaller Weaving factories	2000	workers
8. Krishnarajendra Mills	2500	"
9. Davanagere Mills	1000	"
10. Govt. Electric Factory	500	"
11. Govt. Soap Factory	200	"
12. Glass Factory	500	"
13. Other Joint Stock Companies	2000	"
14. Bhadravati Iron Works	3000	"
15. Mysore Paper Mills	800	"
16. Hindustan Aircraft Factory	6000	"
17. Mysore Mines (K.G.F)	1000	"
<hr/>		
Total	32,800	workers

Roughly, 32,000 labourers were on strike for two weeks. 3000 workers out of 4500 in the Bhadravari Iron works and 400 workers out of 1200 in the Mysore paper Mills, were on strike for one month.

## SHOOTINGS

The police resorted to firing at Bangalore, Davanagere, Mysore, Tumkur and Hassan. Shooting was severe at Bangalore and Davanagere. Nearly 150 persons died at Bangalore and 6 at Davanagere. In

Bangalore, there was a pitched battle for hours on the 16th and 17th of August. When the cavalry charged the crowd, *rags* were thrown on the tarred roads, so that the horses slipped and collapsed in a body. One horse-man died of the fall.

### SABOTAGE ACTIVITIES

Mysore witnessed processions and meetings almost every day for well over two months. The meetings were marvels of orderliness. They assumed control of traffic. Hundreds of students were arrested. Of those left behind, many proceeded to the countryside with the congress message of a fight to the finish. There was extensive wire-cutting all over the districts. The Mysore-Bangalore Line came in for a good deal of attention, as also the Bangalore Hubli and the Bangalore Guntkal Lines. A Goods train was derailed at Srirangpattam, causing considerable damage. Davanagere, Banavar, Holikere, Hosdurg, Jaipur and Tipur Railway stations were burnt. There was extensive ticketless travelling by the students and labourers for 15 days. Running of trains was interfered with by pulling of chains. Milk and vegetable supplies to the military were stopped for a week. Thereafter, soldiers had to accompany the suppliers in trains and buses. Telegraphic wires were extensively cut and removed all over the state. Many telegraph poles were broken. Even to-day miles and miles of telegraphic communications are still unrestored.

Rails were removed for over a mile, and two culverts and one railway bridge destroyed. Rails were tampered with and telephone and telegraph wires cut. At Holikere, Ajjampur, Hosdurga, trains were suspended for a week. Wires were cut between Bangalore and Harihar, Chittaldurg and Jagalur. Wires were destroyed for furlongs at a stretch. At Turvannar in Chittaldurg *taluka* the flag was hoisted on the police station, and kept flying for two months. When the flag was removed after many arrests, young children got together and re-hoisted the flag on their school, and on the hospital in the villages. There was widespread enthusiasm in the Chittaldurg *taluka*. Flags were hoisted on the Government buildings and processions were organised, slogans written on roads and walls and young boys had their caps inscribed as "free citizens".

### THE STUDENTS

The students were still keeping out of schools and

colleges. The University circularised that those who attended examinations on September 28, would not be penalised. All over the state, a big demonstration was organised on the 29th. Mill labourers, who were on strike at Bangalore, picketed the Students. Only 20% of them attended the examinations. Government servants had been circularised to escort boys in their wards to schools and colleges. Buses had been provided to students who wished to attend classes. But the attendance was hardly 20%.

From the 15th August the crowds, mostly students, held up trains, entered them and took control of them. The Rly. officials were offered *Khadi* caps, which they wore. The student leader became the guard. The train would stop wherever there were ticketless travellers to board the train. The train flew the national tricolour. On the 5th September the police boarded the train and beat the students black and blue, left them at the next station, robbing them of what money they had on their persons and stripping them naked. The students replied by setting fire to the Rly. Station at Banamvar. Four bogies were burnt down, as also the booking office. Wires were cut. The police opened fire, killing four and injuring many. An order was promulgated prohibiting meetings, etc. The people, however, defied the orders, and took the dead to the burial ground, with full honours.

### PICKETING OF LIQUOR-SHOPS

Liquor-shops and lorries were picketed. At Bangalore, Government ordered the closing of all liquor-shops in the city for a month. As a sequel to liquor-picketing, there were several *lathi* charges in the mofussil, and a firing in Hassan district, where one man died and several were injured. At Madhugiri there was cutting of toddy trees, and burning of toddy shops. Boradpur was declared a free village with the Patel's son as its head. The Smildar and the revenue authorities, accompanied by a large police force, proceeded to the village. The Patel's son did not let them enter the free village republic. The party returned but came again the next day with a reserve force. The Patel's son refused to surrender and escaped.

### OTHER FEATURE

(a) 12000 workers of the Binny Mills, Maharaja Mills, Minerva Mills, and Mahalaxmi Mills of Bangalore

went on strike from September 19th.

(b) The villagers refused to pay duty at the weekly *bazars* in Hassan district.

(c) Electric transmission lines to Bhadravati were cut off on three occasions.

(d) A culvert on the Sagar-Siddapur line was pulled down.

(e) Two branch post offices in the city were burnt, and cash worth Rs. 5000 removed.

(f) The editors of all the 4 dailies of Bangalore were arrested and prosecuted.

(g) 48 workers in the Mysore Iron works, and 24 in the Mysore Paper Mills were dismissed. Some of these workers were in Jail.

(h) The total number of arrests in the state was about 2000. Nearly 160 persons were killed and several injured.

(i) 10 radios and telephone connections were confiscated.

(j) One *sawar* was killed on the 16th of August. On Sept. 25, the *Mumlatdar* and Police Sub-Inspector were reported to have been killed by a mob at Isur in Shimoga district.

(k) Forest Satyagraha: 200 cattle were taken into the village forest near Bargur village, Hassan district for grazing. A thousand women accompanied the cattle. This resulted in the destruction of a recent plantation of the forest department. The reserve police came and dispersed the cattle and the women.

(l) One of the gold mines struck work.

## REPRESSION

There were numerous searches of houses and presses mostly during midnight. The editors of all the local dailies, Daily News, Tainadu, Janavani and Viswarakshak were prosecuted under D. I. R.

In Hassan district the hired *goondas* entered the houses of villagers, looted their property, assaulted women, belaboured men, and arrested some persons indiscriminately. The brave and resourceful people of Mysore carried on the struggle with undiminished vigour. Whether it was the defiance of bans prohibiting meetings, or

the destruction of the machinery of administration, or non-payment of tax by the village folk, the movement was as strong in its fourth month, as it was in the first.

### COLLECTIVE FINES

Collective fines were imposed on the following villages:

Sarekaidoddi, Bangalore District	...	Rs, 500
Venkataryar Doddi, Bangalore District		Rs. 500
Tayavangi, Shimoga District	...	Rs. 500
Lingadahalli, Shimoga District	...	Rs. 500

### 4—OTHER STATES

There are over 600 native states in India, of these leaving out the small ones, at least forty or fifty have got a definite place and significance in the general polity of the country. The account given here of the progress of the movement in only a few of them should not, however, be taken to signify that the people in the other states did not play their due role in the nation's historic struggle. They also displayed marvellous courage and sacrifice and their glorious encounter with trials and tribulations and difficulties contributed not a little to the glory and honour of our great motherland. But, for all our efforts and endeavours, we could not procure an authentic account of the movement in those states, and our desire to include the same in the present volume could not consequently be fulfilled. Efforts are still being carried on to collect more material and fact, and if possible this gap will be filled up in the next edition.

## PART III

### *WAR AND THE ROLE OF DIFFERENT PARTIES*



## CHAPTER XVII

### CONGRESS

Much before the second world war started the Congress had been pursuing a consistent anti-Fascist policy. When the British statesmen were hobnobbing round the Fascist dictator Mussolini and wooing Adolf Hitler, the Congress leadership in most unequivocal terms condemned the Fascist aggression and the British policy of appeasement. There was not a single Congressman or woman who applauded the much spoken of Munich Pact and Signor Mussolini's dream of the revival of Roman Empire. When war broke out Congress had only 3 courses of action left to it; (1) To help and join the British group of powers without any 'ifs and buts'. That would have been inconsistent to its past declarations and professions. (2) To oppose the British rule here and, if possible, to secure the direct support of the Fascist block and thus gain advantage through this internecine Imperialist war, i.e. to seek their help to overthrow the British rule. That too would have been disastrous, suicidal and against its ideologies and policies. (3) To take to an attitude of neutrality, to wait, watch and agitate till the real character of the war was brought on the surface and to struggle, if need be to turn India's case as an acid test of the sincerity of the Allies in general and the British in particular. Congress demanded the declaration of the war aims from the British which the latter felt hesitant to do. Congress very much wanted to bring up India's question in line with the world affairs and thus it pursued the third course and at the same time it endeavoured to expose the Imperialist designs before the people of the world as a whole. On the other hand it tried to save India from the ravages of the war and to develop within her a robust yearning to achieve country's independence without struggle, if possible, with it, if necessary. Britain's, ... failure to clarify the war aims drove the Congress to stage a symbolic protest against it, known as the individual *satyagrah*, the aim of which was to seek the elementary right of expression for the country, and its technique was to reserve its power of assertion for the bigger struggle to be launched at a later date, if need be.

From the very beginning Congress leadership asserted that this war was not a people's war and it could only be converted into as such if the people were inspired and enthused to treat it as a war of their own. This could again only be done when real power was transferred to people's representatives and thus the demand for establishment of a National Government was made. Britain failed to gauge the urge of the people and relied more upon its physical might to suppress any people's rising. Congress had foreseen an inevitable conflict between the Nationalist India and the British Imperialism. Congress did not want that the country should be caught napping, so the Congress leadership forced by local and external objective conditions decided upon a line of action and prepared the country psychologically and organisationally if possible for a mighty and final struggle. People had lost all hope in British justice and security to be afforded by the British arm. They began to rally round the Congress banner for the safety of their homes and hearths. The Congress also felt that it could not sit quiet as a neutral force without forcing the British either to quit the Indian shores or remain here under a National Government which could alone deliver goods to the people and help the people to keep up their morale faced as the country was with an impending danger of Jap aggression, and also the inflation, scarcity of services and commodities and other war borne miseries. Before the Congress could decide upon the shape of the coming movement the assault was made on it by the British and what followed the Congress Leaders has been the subject matter of the book.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### MUSLIM LEAGUE

Mr. Jinnah and his League are a riddle and seemingly insoluble problem in Indian politics. To grasp or understand Mr. Jinnah's technique, firstly we need to make a dispassionate analysis of the exact objective conditions that have considerably contributed to the growth and development of the League leadership and organization as a potential factor in Indian politics. No leadership on the earth has been able to turn the favourable objective conditions so remarkably to its advantage as did the Muslim League during the war period. Its repute and popularity had its own mushroom growth. Often one wonders in amazement as to how it has happened as if charmed by a genii.

Mr. Jinnah as a shrewd leader worked up his thesis on the bed-rock of ever-growing and ever lasting conflict between the Imperialism of the British and Indian Nationalism as represented by the Congress. Firstly, he formulated a vague demand, too inexplicit yet striking and too exciting, popularly known as the Pakistan demand. To the British he said, "If I were to join hands with the Congress you dare not resist the moral and physical pressure to be brought in by the League and Congress., so settle with the League and accede to my demand of Pakistan. I have always rendered assistance to you in your moments of distress. Now it is time for you to prove your gratitude to the League." To the Congress he would say, "You can succeed in seizing power from the British hands only if the Musalmans joined you which they cannot do unless you accede to their demand of Pakistan." This policy has been very paying to the League leadership. By the policy of sheer bluffing, blustering and biting which he so fanatically followed, Mr. Jinnah has succeeded to score tactical victories over both British and the Congress and forced them to woo him in turn to get his support. To crush the Congress British needed the local moral support. The Congress in its anxiety to embrace all faiths and communities in its orbit needed the League and its sympathy for the successful

prosecution of its freedom's struggle. Thus the British and the Congress both looked to Mr. Jinnah who utilized this opportunity to constitute the League into an indispensable organisation. Naturally the League leadership enjoyed during this period an enviable position and hypnotised the Muslim masses with the exciting slogan "we are a different nation", "we want a separate homeland" and provided them with an enthusing objective, i. e. 'the land of the pure' Pakistan. The Muslim masses, whose passions were worked up by the hymn of hate and myth of Pakistan, rallied round the crescent like German's, who through Hitler's hymn of hatred against the Jews worked anti-semitic ideas in Germany. Mr. Jinnah succeeded to organize the Muslims of India by creating the fantasy of the coming Hindu Raj and ghost of 'Islam in danger'. To perpetuate his hold upon and to give a social philosophy to his followers he developed his 'two nation' theory.

During the war Mr. Jinnah followed in the footsteps of the Congress for he very well knew that Muslim masses were as much anti-British as Hindus were and therefore his success would lay in convincing the Muslim masses that the Congress was not so much an anti-Imperialist a party as it was anti-Islamic. It was purely a caste Hindu *Sangathan* and therefore the success of the Congress would mean ruin of the Islamic culture. Obviously Mr. Jinnah could not take to a straight pro-British or pro-Government attitude, for the Muslim masses were also being subjected to various hardships and inconveniences arising out of the war and thus they could not be expected to follow him if he led them in the British camp. Therefore he pursued a course of reconciliation between pro-British and anti-British sentiments of the Muslim masses. He followed in the footsteps of the Congress in so far as the anti-Imperialist and anti-British expressions in his speech and resolutions were concerned while actually he helped the British, indirectly of course, against the Congress and used the Congress non-cooperation movement for the consolidation of Muslim masses and aggrandisement of power. When the Congress talked of the 'open rebellion' Mr. Jinnah again gave warning to both Congress and the Government. He threatened civil war if any attempt to approach the Muslim masses to join the struggle was made by the Congress. He warned the British not to acquiesce in the Congress demand and offered the League's help to

form the National Government provided' all power was transferred to the League. Thus the League under Jinnah rose to glory and power during the war.

Because it was in the interest of the British they worked as a dynamo which generated energy and power for the League during the war which rose as a strong anti-Congress power. But the power it thus mustered up during the war was borrowed one while it was all hollow from within, is very well manifested by the events of the post-war period. The British under the impact of combination of circumstances, i. e. growing Russian influence in the East, coming into power of the Labour Government etc., thought it much prudent to gain sympathies of the nationalist forces and showed their eagerness to ally with the nationalist India. This robbed the League of the vital force, but Mr. Jinnah, though painfully conscious of it, would not admit it, nay he became much more louder against the British and the Congress, threatened to start a 'Direct Action' and civil war on the basis of his presumption that the British would not part with power while the Congress was too impatient for Swaraj. But as times have changed, the real Imperialists were routed in Britain and the order was fast changing itself to the new needs of the time. Mentally constituted as Mr. Jinnah is, it, was difficult for him to understand this revolutionary social transformation. He, therefore, stuck to his own ways and means. The British very well knew that this was all the Hitlerian bluff and blast without the German penzer division. Congress leadership too very well knew the League leadership have not trained the Muslim masses for suffering and sacrifices, but had fed them with the hymn of hatred and pure aggrandisement which divest the people of the power of resistance and endurance to face awkward situations, whenever they are faced with desperation. It is a very suicidal policy for a political party to follow. It is suicidal for its growth and development. The result was that bewildered and desperate, Mr. Jinnah joined the Interim Govt. Mr. Jinnah's threat of communal war and 'Direct Action' had to culminate in the unconditional and uncereemonious entry into the Interim Government, the proposition once thrown overboard by Mr. Jinnah and the Muslim League, on grounds of tactics and diplomatic retreat, to fight for the achievement of Pakistan from within as they say. Mr. Jinnah had also to reorientate his outlook and policy. For decades he tacitly endeavoured to give a purely

communal shape to the Muslim League. Now the futility of fighting in purely communal plane has become quite clear to him. In order to give a political shape to his organisation, he has now given a seat to a non-caste Hindu in the Interim Government from the Muslim quota. The League, which wanted more seats for the Muslims, has given one seat to a non-Muslim. This smacks of defeatism which has come to stay with Mr. Jinnah at present. I do not want to dilate upon the history of the Muslim League. Much less do I want to condemn the League leadership at this stage, but the impression that the Muslims did not take part in the 'open rebellion' of 1942 is so misleading that it needs to be contradicted in the light of baffling attitude adopted by the Leadership. Muslims did play a prominent part in 1942 though Mr. Jinnah and the League did their best to create anti-Hindu and anti-Congress feelings among the Muslim masses.

## CHAPTER XIX

### COMMUNIST PARTY

The Communist Party in India was formed in 1924. This is a very well organised and well disciplined party having in it a good number of intelligent hard-working youngmen and women. But unfortunately the Communists of India did not develop a policy of their own, a policy based upon the social economic conditions obtaining in the country and her cultural traditions. There is one inherent contradiction in the Communist Party in India which came to surface during the War. According to the Communists of India Russia is the mother country of Communism, and it is the Russian masses that hold the dynamo of Communism and all progressive forces. It is Moscow which is the nucleus of all the advanced thoughts, new visions, new vistas and openings in the progressive and prosperous world. The Indian Communists have however, never cared to organise the masses, to explain their programme to them, to win their co-operation and allegiance in India, the land of their birth. In fact in the Indian politics they were least concerned with the masses. This apparent apathy shown to the Communists' strategy of broad-basing their movement upon the sympathies of India divested them of much popular glory and strength. They believed that there was play of economic forces in India and proletariat were bound to rise against the capitalists, the landlords and other vested interests without their making any effort to create class. This conflict between classes they took to be as a matter of fact event which were bound to arouse an urge among the people to destroy the reign of inequalities. They therefore busied themselves with high politics and accumulating glamour round the organisation. They only worked on high political play. They tried to consolidate the Leftists in the Congress, but most of the Leftists refused to be duped by Communists because they were not prepared to receive orders from outside world, because they were eager for a programme of action, arrived at keeping in view the conditions, political, social and economic, of India,

During the war the Communists followed what can now fairly be called suicidal policy. Their hypocrisy was exposed, the hollowness in their organisation was revealed when the war broke out, and Russia and Germany for their own respective interests formed a non-aggressive pact. Communists of India cried that it was an Imperialist war. All the world over Communists had open sympathies for Germany. The French Communists advised to sabotage the war efforts of M. Daladier, the then Prime Minister of France from Berlin Radio. The French Communists were exhorting the French people to embarrass their Government in their war effort, but the character of war for the Communists changed when Russia was attacked by Germany. Germany, which had before her attack on Russia very active allies in the Communists, now became an Imperialist country and the war became the people's war. Without the slightest improvement in the lot of the people, without the least sympathy and friendly attitude shown by the British to the Indians, for the Indian Communists also the war became the people's war, and they began to preach the gospel of friendship and love for the British. One can contemplate about the awkwardness of the situation in which Congress would have been placed if it were to follow the same advice of the Communist friends. When the war broke out it would have non-cooperated with the British and after Russia's entry into the war it would have asked the country to do or die for the British. Congress non-cooperated with the British in the war effort because it always believed that the war was essentially an Imperialist war, the peoples of two similar political beliefs were contesting for the domination of the world. Russia's entry into the war did not alter the character and the spirit of the war, so it always non-cooperated with the British and always stood for India's demand of freedom even to fight against Axis powers. To Congress the war would have been a people's war only if not only India but all the subject nations of the world would have been made free and would have been left to themselves to join the progressive forces of the world.

The Communists in their new role had their hay days during the war. They received every consideration from the Government while the miseries of the people went on multiplying and becoming more terrible with the lapse of time. On the cessation of the hostilities and after the release of the Congress leaders India represented by Congress examined her position with special reference to

the role played by the Indian Communists. Indians had now time to expose the hypocritic role played by the Communists. Congress survived to avenge deceit played upon it by the Communists. When the British were busy in suppressing the Congress movement; when they were letting loose the hordes of the Hun in the country; when villagers and city people were subjected to innumerable hardships and indignities; when the life, honour and property of every section of Indian population and people of every age—category and of both the sexes were rendered unsafe, the Communists were openly helping the British not only to defeat the Nazis and the Japanese but also to strangle the India struggling to be free. Strangely enough these people were doing this all by remaining in the Congress fold. When the Congress came into its own, its first task therefore was to expel the Communists from its fold and to brand these people as traitors.

The Communists are still a party mustering up courage and strength but they are allied much more than at any other time with the Muslim League and other reactionary forces, only because they are anti-Congress. It seems that today they have no other programme but to oppose the Congress tooth and nail. The people who once talked of liberating the country from the foreign yoke and establishing in India the rule of the proletariat have chosen to become the champions of reaction and India's bondage. The somersault which characterises the Communists and which has defamed it did not win for it even the sympathies of the British, once their allies. No tear is shed by the British over the wail of the Communists of India. The cream of Indian youth in the rank and file of the Communist Party of India has forfeited the confidence and sympathies of the Indian people for themselves.

## CHAPTER XX

### HINDU MAHASABHA

The Hindu Mahasabha has never been a well-organised organisation because it could never appeal to the masses. It was for the simple reason, that its final goal of independence of the country was exactly for what Congress was fighting for without losing its national character, that the Mahasabha could not appeal to the politically enlightened Hindu populace. Congress true to its principles and professions continued existing and working as a national organisation even during the days it was in the saddle in 8 provinces under the Govt. of India Act, 1935. It dispensed equitable justice to all the communities, it was eager to come to terms with Muslim League and tried to meet most of its demands. This made many Hindus sceptic about Congress intentions and they thought that the best interests of the Hindu community were at stake. So they fell back upon the Hindu Mahasabha which began to be more pronounced as a communal organisation.

There is hardly any difference in the programme and policies of both the communal organisations of the land, viz, the Muslim League and Hindu Mahasabha. Both were for unconditional cooperation with the British in the war effort and both wanted to make the best use of the situation, both wanted fresh jobs and fresh opportunities for their adherents, though the Muslim League was not articulate so far its intentions were concerned, but the Mahasabha freely asked the Hindu youth to join Military in their hundreds and thousands so that they received suitable military training and thus, through arms would liberate the country at a future date. Both the League and the Mahasabha wanted to profit by the growing tangle between the Congress and the British, but since the League was ruling over three provinces, it was a force to be counted upon. Moreover its organisation was very sound and its mass appeal was greater. The British, therefore, gave preference to the League and was anxious to meet most of its demands. This made the

Muslim League much more stronger and its ranks inflated day in and day out. Mahasabha had no such opportunities. Therefore the British paid very scanty regard to it though they were not prepared to forsake the Mahasabha altogether because it would throw the Mahasabha in the lap of the Congress. But nothing by the way of stimulation and encouragement was given to the Mahasabha. This considerably weakened the Mahasabha as an organisation.

The Hindus, as already averted to, are very politically conscious. They have no communal tinge about them. They were with the Congress and at every stage in the history of Congress when it gave to the country a programme of action, service and sacrifice, Hindus in their thousands joined it. The Hindu Mahasabha like the Muslim League was used, to giving threats to the British. They demanded Dominion Status for the country and threatened to start a direct action against the British if their demand was not conceded to at a specific date. Many such dates came and went but the Mahasabha never started any action against the British. The Mahasabha leaders never suffered for the country barring during the Bhagalpore episode when the Mahasabha leaders were detained for a few days. This revealed that the Mahasabha was a conglomeration of arm-chair politicians and opportunists. This weaned away from the Mahasabha the popular appeal as well as the active cooperation and open sympathies of the British. This has reduced Mahasabha to a political non-entity, to a group of persons who only shout and do not work, to a party the ultimate goal of which does not differ from that of the congress barring its communal aspect, but the party which has neither programme of action nor any ways and means for the attainment of its ultimate goal.

## CHAPTER XXI

### CONGRESS SOCIALIST PARTY

The party was born in 1934 within the Congress fold. It is the party of fiery and progressive leftist Congressmen. They believe that the construction of society should be based on socialistic principles and that for the purpose of the National Movement, secret and organised violence may be adopted if occasion demands it. While believing in Congress leadership for the sake of national unity these people do not fully believe in the policy of non-violence as initiated by Gandhiji. They believe in using all weapons that suit the occasion. There has been a great increase in the party's power and prestige within these twelve years. In the beginning of European war this party also believed in starting a big movement. They were not quite satisfied with the Individual Civil-disobedience movement started by Gandhiji. In 1942 when Congress adopted the Wardha resolution they gave it a hearty welcome. They also presented Gandhiji's slogans 'Quit India' and 'Open Rebellion' to the people, in a revolutionary form. In 1942 when the British Imperialism struck the first blow on the Congress and Congressmen began to be arrested everywhere, then the leaders of Congress Socialist Party initiated their new policy towards the 'Open Rebellion' and adopted new methods. They interpreted in their own way, the earlier speeches and writings of Mahatma Gandhi and emphasised that Gandhiji actually wanted an 'Open Rebellion', and that it was essential to keep the spirit of the movement alive somehow or the other. Gandhiji had given liberty to every individual to express his indignation in whatever manner he thought best. So they began to initiate secret organisations and encouraged the formation of people's front wherever possible. They also followed the principles of Guerilla warfare. So in 1942 it was discovered that against the principles of Gandhiji's open movements the socialist leaders employed their own methods and thus offered us a glimpse of the new leadership in Indian politics. All the socialist leaders that could avoid arrests did so and used secret methods. The escape of Jai Prakash Narain from

the jail gave new life and encouragement to this secret movement. Shri Jai Prakash Narain, Ram Manohar Lohia Achyut Patwardhan, B. S. Dandekar and Mohan Lal Gautam are the prominent leaders of this party. Most of them carried on their work in their own provinces till the end. Their programme has a special attraction for the youth. Thus Congress Socialist party gathered enough strength during the '42 movement and organised itself as an alternate leadership. We have already considered this aspect in detail elsewhere.

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